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by

Jonathan David Rogers

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**Social Media and the City of New Braunfels, Texas:
Foundations and Guidance for Implementing a Social Media Strategy**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Patrick Wong

Co-Supervisor:

Sirkka Jarvenpaa

Angela Evans

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Jonathan David Rogers, B.A.

Report

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to many who have been good friends and advisors over the last three years: my lovely wife, who doubles as my greatest supporter; Boomer, my brother and hero; my grandparents, with sadness that Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rogers could not share this moment with me; my parents and in-laws; Jasen, Dan, and Stew for their steadfast friendship; Talitha May for her patience and enthusiasm for writing; and to the memory of Professor Gary Chapman.

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Finally, I share my heartfelt thanks for the community of LBJ School Professional Report writers for many months of dialogue and support.

May 6, 2011

Abstract

Social Media and the City of New Braunfels, Texas: Foundations and Guidance for Implementing a Social Media Strategy

Jonathan David Rogers, M.P.Aff and MBA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

Supervisor: Patrick Wong

Co-Supervisor: Sirkka Jarvenpaa

Many municipalities are deciding how to engage their citizens through social media while, at the same time, the universe of social media applications continues to grow and evolve. As of May 2011, the government of the City of New Braunfels, Texas, is not using centralized social media to interact with its constituents. This report considers whether or not social media tools are appropriate to help the city reach three identified service goals: 1) strengthening emergency management and communications services; 2) providing the capability to serve as a direct-to-citizen news entity instead of relying on traditional media for messaging; and 3) increasing public participation and engagement. Possible options and unresolved issues associated with each goal are presented.

The community demographic profile of New Braunfels, the city's status as a small urban community, and citizen access to high-speed Internet service increases the likelihood that residents will be online and engaged with social media on a regular basis.

Data regarding the ownership of mobile phones and the use of these devices to connect to the Internet, combined with growing interest in social media, supports the exploration of social media for crisis communications. Three types of social media applications (microblogs/status-sharing applications, public alert applications, and blogs) present possible options for the use of social media to support emergency communications.

Existing patterns of local press coverage provide the city with the possible motivation to innovate its message delivery. Possible options that could facilitate the city's engagement of social media for messaging include hiring a public information officer, conducting an audit of the city's brand identity online, and examining social media applications used by the city's market comparators, including micromedia, photo and video sharing, and blogs.

While data is limited with respect to existing levels of civic engagement, establishing social media policies and metrics capable of adapting to changing technologies could provide city administrators with a reasonable perspective on the value of social media for improving public engagement and participation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Social media, like any other technology applied to the work of government, is not a fix-all tool that can change municipal public service on its own. The many applications of social media do, however, represent potentially useful instruments that could help strengthen the existing capabilities of local governments, if implemented successfully.¹ As of May 2011, the City of New Braunfels, Texas, lacks a centralized social media strategy and has not implemented social media tools. This report considers three service goals identified by senior-level administrators in the City of New Braunfels, Texas, and analyzes whether social media tools are appropriate to help the city reach these goals.

Specifically, city officials hope: 1) to strengthen emergency management and communications services; 2) to use new media to allow the city to serve as its own direct-to-citizen news entity instead of relying on traditional media for messaging; and 3) to increase public participation and engagement, particularly with respect to citizen involvement with government initiatives like city boards and commissions.² Each goal holds equal merit; thus, the order of presentation does not reflect a ranked order of importance. Throughout this report, each goal is considered with respect to available social media tools, relevant examples drawn from government use of social media, and the city's existing capabilities.

This chapter provides an overview of social media use by cities and describes the methodology used for this report. This chapter also provides background on the City of

¹ Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 2.

² Deborah Korinchock (Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas), Interview with Jonathan Rogers, Dec. 2, 2010.

New Braunfels and compares national Internet and social media trends to current demographics in New Braunfels.

OVERVIEW: SOCIAL MEDIA AND CITIES

The term “social media” represents a wide variety of tools that enable users to use the Internet via computers and mobile devices to engage in social interaction associated with exchanging information, holding online discussions, and creating content.³ Social media tools include – but are not limited to – websites for social networking (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn); blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter); websites for video sharing (e.g., YouTube) and photo sharing (e.g., Flickr);⁴ and Real (or Really) Simple Syndication (RSS).⁵ Definitions associated with specific applications can be found in Appendix A. Generally speaking, social media is more about dialogue than one-way broadcasts, provides discretion to its users for the selection of desired content, and depends on the size of a social network for the delivery of a message.⁶

At present, many municipalities are deciding how to engage their citizens through social media while, at the same time, the universe of social media applications continues to grow and evolve.⁷ To date, more than 60-70 percent of cities use some form of social media to support operations or for communication purposes.⁸ As more cities add social

³ Damian Ryan and Calvin Jones, *Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation* (London, UK: Kogan Page, 2009), p. 152; Stephanie Weiss, *Risk Management Information: Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations* (St. Paul, MN: League of Minnesota Cities, 2009), p. 1.

⁴ Weiss, *Risk Management Information: Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations* (2009), p. 1.

⁵ Kent Wertime and Ian Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons – Asia, 2008), p. 21.

⁶ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, (2010), p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 3; Weiss, *Risk Management Information: Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations* (2009), p. 1.

⁸ Cindy Waxer, “CIOs Struggle With Social Media’s Security Risks,” *Government Technology Online: Public CIO*, last modified Feb. 11, 2011, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/pcio/CIOs-Social-Media-Security-Risks-021111.html>; Tina Trenkner, “Is Social Media a Friend or Foe of

media tools, a considerable amount of experimentation continues at the local level as government agencies sort out policy and message issues.⁹ Cities that use social media may opt for one of the more popular websites, e.g., Facebook or Twitter, possibly for use within only one or two departments.¹⁰ Also, a presence in social media does not guarantee that city social media channels will be widely used. For example, a survey of nearly eighty social media municipalities by the Fels Institute of Government found that only 16 percent had a Facebook page with more than five-hundred fans and only 9 percent had a Twitter feed with more than five-hundred followers.¹¹ Additionally, as will be addressed later in this report, city use of social media includes consideration of guidelines for appropriate use, content archiving, information security, privacy, and citizen access.¹²

Methods

Because the use of social media among cities is a new occurrence, this report is limited by the fact that few objective case studies exist to support municipal social media strategies, particularly with respect to goal attainment, metrics used to analyze results, and the opportunity cost of implementing and administering social media tools.¹³

Government?" *Governing* (online), last modified Dec. 31, 2009, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/Is-Social-Media-a.html>.

⁹ Bill Greeves, "Govt 2.0: From Tools to Policy to Convergence," *MuniGov 2.0* (blog), June 30, 2010, <http://www.digitalcommunities.com/blogs/munigov/>.

¹⁰ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, (2010), p. 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹² Michelle Bono and Nannette Rodriguez, "Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now," (ICMA University webconference, accessed via webcast, New Braunfels, Texas, Dec. 2, 2010); Todd Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (Government Technology's Digital Communities, 2008), p. 6, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf; Tina Trenkner, "Public Records in a Box," *View* (blog), Jan. 5, 2010, <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/Public-Records-in-a.html>.

¹³ David Landsbergen, "Government as Part of the Revolution: Using Social Media to Achieve Public Goals," *Electronic Journal of e-Government* 8, no. 2 (2010): 137; Lynn Mandarano, Mahbubur Meenar,

According to Mandarano, et al. (2010), current studies of cities and social media are more descriptive than analytical or evaluative in nature, particularly with respect to civic engagement.¹⁴ Also, the continual evolution of social media technologies prevents the recommendation of certain tools over others for long-term use.

Consequently, this study draws upon research offered by the Fels Institute of Government, the Center for Technology in Government, and the Pew Internet and American Life Project, among others, in addition to professional publications, to find examples of cities using social media to support goals similar to those pursued by the City of New Braunfels. As often as possible, these cities and their choices of social media tools are considered as benchmarks for New Braunfels. To find out more about municipal social media use within the State of Texas, the author contacted chief information officers and social media administrators of Texas cities identified within best practice lists to solicit information on their experience. Finally, this report gleans guidance from business and marketing literature with respect to best practices in social media use.

As noted above, the City of New Braunfels does not have a centralized social media presence designed and administered through City Hall. However, two of its city departments (Parks and Recreation and the Library) use social media tools without formal policies or oversight from the city manager or other central administrators.¹⁵ In addition, the two city independent school districts (New Braunfels and Comal) use social media tools, and several of the Texas cities against which New Braunfels compares itself are

and Christopher Steins, "Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement," *Journal of Planning Literature* 25, no. 2 (2010): 130.

¹⁴ Lynn Mandarano, Mahbubur Meenar, and Christopher Steins, "Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement," *Journal of Planning Literature* 25, no. 2 (2010): 130.

¹⁵ Stacey Laird-Dicke (Director, Parks and Recreation, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 18, 2011; Kit Ward-Crixell (Librarian, New Braunfels Public Library, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 15, 2011.

active in social media. This report considers social media used by the city departments, school districts, and comparable cities for relevant lessons and implications of social media use.

THE CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS AND THE CASE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to establish a foundation for the efficacy of a social media strategy in New Braunfels, this report considers whether or not city demographics match those of typical Internet and social media users. In fact, even without precise data about Internet access within the City,¹⁶ the community demographic profile of New Braunfels matches closely on race, age, and household income with the national profile of the typical, high-access Internet user, despite lower levels of higher education attainment. The city's status as a small urban community, in which residents have access to high-speed Internet service, also supports the premise that city residents are likely to be online on a regular basis.¹⁷ The following paragraphs provide more information with respect to city demographics and possible activity online.

City Location

Located approximately thirty-two miles from San Antonio and forty-eight miles from Austin, New Braunfels, Texas, is only an hour by automobile from the country's seventh largest city and the Texas State Capitol.¹⁸ Founded by Prince Carl of Solms of Braunfels, Germany, in 1845 as a community for 6,000 settlers, New Braunfels is still

¹⁶ In an attempt to obtain Internet usage data specific for New Braunfels, the author engaged Tiffany Creamer, Account Executive, Time Warner Cable in phone and e-mail conversation. By the time of publication, Ms. Creamer had not replied to a written request for data.

¹⁷ "Trend Data, Demographics of Internet Users," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Whos-Online.aspx>.

¹⁸ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (New Braunfels, TX: Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, 2011), p. 16.

renowned for the continuing influences of its cultural heritage, from its bratwurst and German bakeries to the city's slogan, "In New Braunfels ist das leiben schön! [In New Braunfels life is good!]"¹⁹ The city's location along Interstate 35 and its many attractions, including the state's oldest dance hall (Gruene Hall), a nationally famous water park (Schlitterbahn), activities on the nearby Comal and Guadalupe Rivers, and the annual Wurstfest celebration bring more than 2 million visitors each year to New Braunfels.²⁰

City Population Growth

In addition to tourism, the City of New Braunfels is experiencing population growth. The Chamber of Commerce estimates that the current population growth rate is roughly 4-6 percent per year, with an increase of over 30 percent in just the last six years.²¹ In 2000, the United States Census recorded a population of 36,494 for the city; by 2006, the population had grown more than 36 percent, to 49,969.²² For reference, during the same span of time, the population of the entire state increased only 12.7 percent.²³ More recently, the 2010 Census reported that the population of New Braunfels has grown by another 15 percent, to 57,740.²⁴

¹⁹ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (2011), p. 14, 20.

²⁰Ibid., p. 16, 49.

²¹Ibid., p. 18.

²² "State & County QuickFacts: New Braunfels (city), Texas," United States Census Bureau, last modified July 8, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4850820.html>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "2010 Census Redistricting Data (P. L. 94-171) Summary File: New Braunfels city, Texas," United States Census Bureau, 2010 Census, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/main.html>.

Comparison of National Internet and Social Media Trends to City Demographics

In May 2010, the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project reported that 79 percent of American adults use the Internet.²⁵ Among those who use the Internet, the highest categories of users, by percentage, were as follows: by race, English-speaking Hispanics (82 percent); by age, adults aged 18 to 29 (95 percent); by income, households with an income of more than \$75,000 (95 percent); and by education, individuals with at least a college or university education (96 percent).²⁶ In addition, adults living in suburban or urban areas were more likely to be Internet users than those in rural areas.²⁷ Figure 1.1 (below) summarizes demographic characteristics of adult Internet users in the United States. Among the categories presented below, the only demographic category with less than a majority of adults using the Internet is the group of individuals over the age of 65.²⁸

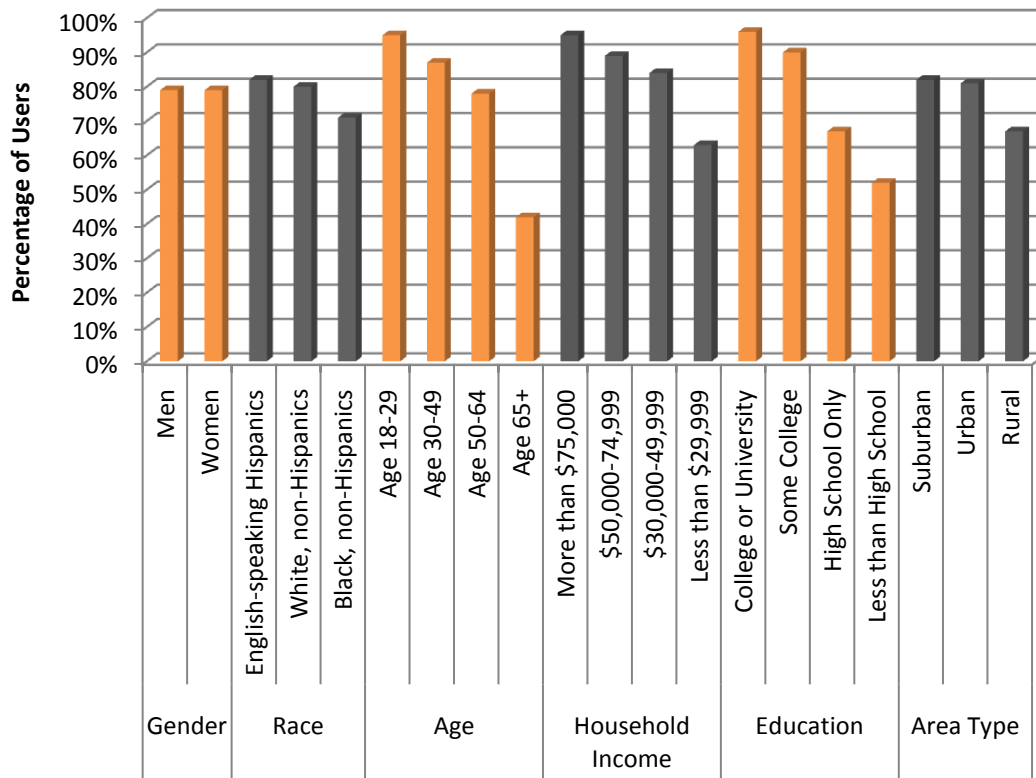
²⁵ "Trend Data," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activites-Total.aspx>.

²⁶ "Trend Data, Demographics of Internet Users," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Whos-Online.aspx>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Figure 1.1: Demographic Characteristics of Adult Internet Users in the United States (2010)



Source: “Trend Data, Demographics of Internet Users,” Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Whos-Online.aspx>.

According to research by Pew and the Girl Scout Institute (2011), 93 percent of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet.²⁹ The same study finds that Internet access is greatest among teenagers from white families, with parents who have college educations, and with annual household incomes exceeding \$50,000.³⁰ According to the Pew Research Center (2010), 76 percent of families with children aged 12-17 have broadband Internet access, while only 60 percent of the overall adult population has

²⁹ Kimberlee Salmond and Kristen Purcell, “Trends in Teen Communication and Social Media Use: What’s Really Going On Here?” (webinar presentation, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, Washington, DC, Feb. 9, 2011). Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org>.

³⁰ Ibid.

broadband.³¹ The same research reveals that adults with wireless Internet service and broadband access tend to be more likely to go online daily than those without broadband or on some other wired connection.³² The availability of high-speed, broadband Internet access tends to be higher in households with white families, higher levels of income, and higher levels of education attainment; subsequently, research indicates that teenagers from homes that share these traits are more likely to be online.³³

According to the 2010 Census, 86.8 percent of the population of New Braunfels is white (50,132), with 35.0 percent (20,230) of the total number of citizens identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race.³⁴ Among citizens over the age of 18, 88.0 percent identify themselves as white, and only 31.0 percent consider themselves Hispanic or Latino.³⁵ Also with respect to race, only 1.9 percent of the total population is Black or African American, 1.0 percent is Asian, and less than one percent is American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.³⁶ While the percentage of persons of Hispanic or Latino origin is slightly higher than the state overall, New Braunfels has a slightly lower percentage of homes in which a language other than English is spoken (29.5 percent compared to 31.2 percent statewide).³⁷

³¹ Amanda Lenhart, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, and Kathryn Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2010), p. 6, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³³ Salmond and Purcell, "Trends in Teen Communication and Social Media Use: What's Really Going On Here?" (2011). Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org>.

³⁴ "2010 Census Redistricting Data (P. L. 94-171) Summary File: New Braunfels city, Texas," United States Census Bureau, 2010 Census, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/main.html>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ "State & County QuickFacts: New Braunfels (city), Texas," United States Census Bureau, last modified July 8, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4850820.html>.

In New Braunfels, the median age for residents is approximately 31.5 years old.³⁸ By 2008, the Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) estimates that 28.2 percent of the population was under the age of 19. Similarly, based on numbers from the 2000 Census, 37.0 percent of all New Braunfels households included at least one individual under 18 years old.³⁹ Also, according to the Chamber, another 26 percent of the 2008 population was between the ages of 20 and 34.⁴⁰

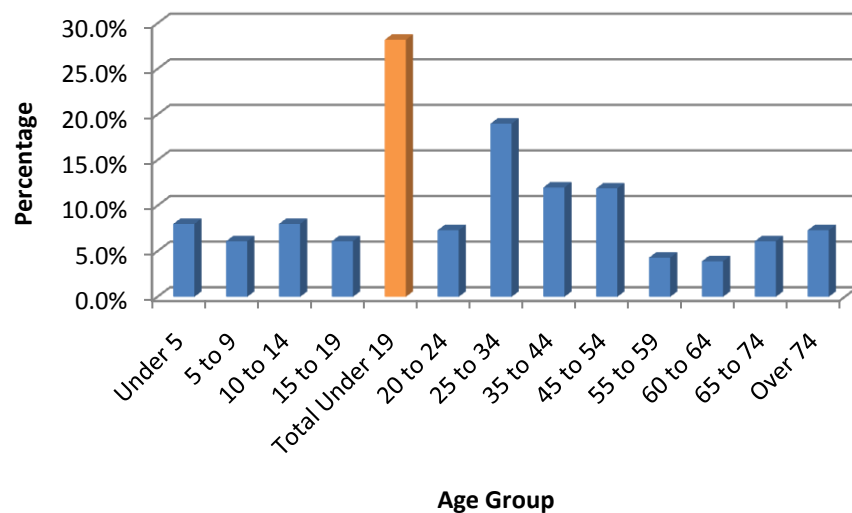
In keeping with the Pew research presented above, a majority of the city population by age could be expected to be Internet users. Figure 1.2 (below) illustrates the population of New Braunfels by age group.

³⁸ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (2011), p. 18.

³⁹ "Census 2000 Summary File 2 (SF 2) 100-Percent Data: Total population, New Braunfels city, Texas," United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/main.html>.

⁴⁰ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (2011), p. 18. Note: The Chamber estimates that the city population in 2008-09 was between 53,000 and 57,000.

Figure 1.2: Estimated Population by Age Group: City of New Braunfels (2008)



Source: The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (New Braunfels, TX: Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, 2011), p. 18.

With respect to income and education, the 2000 Census reported that the median household income in New Braunfels was \$40,078 (higher than the state median of \$39,927), with 10.9 percent of the population below poverty (lower than 15.4 percent statewide).⁴¹ Among families, median incomes were higher, ranging from \$44,525 to \$53,155, depending on marital status and children in the home.⁴² As of 2010, approximately 6.0 percent of residents were classified as unemployed, compared to 8.0 percent for the State of Texas.⁴³ The 2000 Census also indicated that, relative to the state, higher percentages of New Braunfels residents have formal education. Among all

⁴¹ "State & County QuickFacts: New Braunfels (city), Texas," United States Census Bureau, last modified July 8, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4850820.html>.

⁴² "Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) – Sample Data, Total population, New Braunfels city, Texas," United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/main.html>.

⁴³ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (2011), p. 19.

individuals over the age of 25, 78.0 percent are high-school graduates (Texas: 75.7 percent), while 24.6 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher (Texas: 23.2 percent).⁴⁴

Judging by city demographics on race, age, median income, and education, a majority of the city population matches the profile of the national population that tends toward higher levels of Internet use.⁴⁵ This comparison also supports an estimation of the types of individuals most likely to be users of social media.

While online, increasing numbers of adults and young people are using social media in one form or another. For example, Facebook alone has at least 500 million active users. Additional statistical information regarding popular social media websites can be found in Appendix B. Younger Americans have the highest rates of social media use, and teenagers who are online daily tend to use social network sites at greater rates than those who are online less frequently.⁴⁶ A study by the National School Board Association indicates that 96 percent of United States students between the ages of 9 and 17 have used some form of social network service to interact with fellow students.⁴⁷ Studies of social media use also indicate that adults are active with these applications. For example, Pew research (2010) finds that teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 and young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 are almost equally likely to use social networking sites (roughly 72-73 percent of the total population).⁴⁸ Figure 1.3 (below)

⁴⁴ "State & County QuickFacts: New Braunfels (city), Texas," United States Census Bureau, last modified July 8, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4850820.html>.

⁴⁵ Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 9-10, 13, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

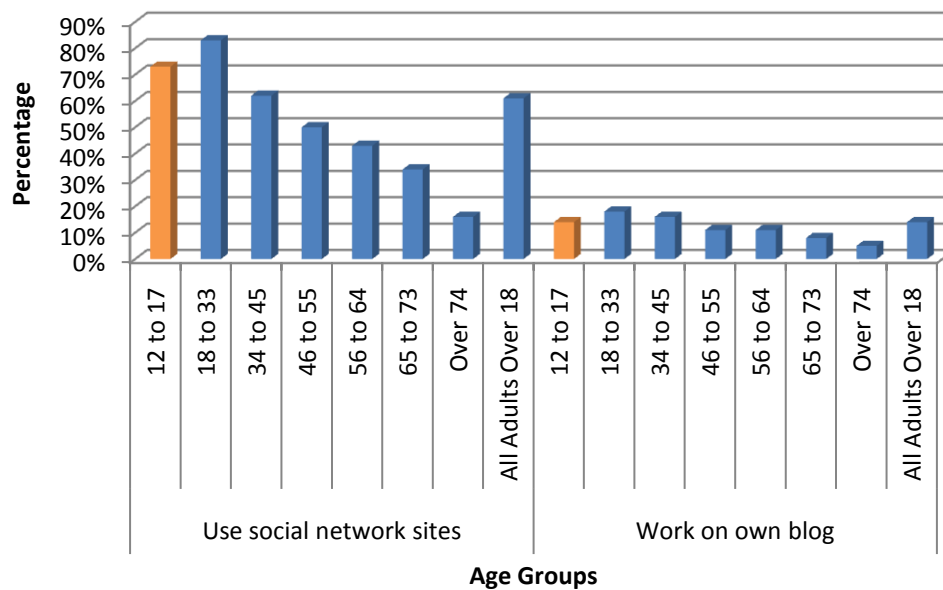
⁴⁶ Amanda Lenhart, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, and Kathryn Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2010), p. 17, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

⁴⁷ Christopher Vollmer with Geoffrey Precourt, *Always On: Advertising, Marketing, and Media in an Era of Consumer Control* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2008), p. 64.

⁴⁸ Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (2010), p. 17, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

illustrates, by age group, the percentage of Americans who use social network websites or contribute to their own blog.⁴⁹ While these two categories do not encompass all social media, they provide a snapshot of the prevalence of one social media activity with growing popularity (social networking) and one with declining popularity (blogging), albeit as the latter shows trend increases among older Internet users.⁵⁰

Figure 1.3: Social Network Site Use and Blog Writing among Americans, by Age Group (2010)



Source: Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 15, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

Additionally, surveys implemented by the National Association of State Chief Information Officers and Pew indicate that the median ages for the websites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are all over 30, while Facebook is very popular among adults over

⁴⁹ Note: This does not include individuals who contribute or comment on other blogs or who indicate that they regularly read one or more blogs.

⁵⁰ Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (2010), p. 3, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

30. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 (below) summarize findings with respect to median age and demographics associated with adults with at least one profile on a social networking website.

Table 1.1: Median Ages of Users on Specific Social Networking Sites (2009-10)

Survey	Social Network	Median Age
NASCIO (2010)	LinkedIn	44
	Facebook	38
	Twitter	39
Pew (2009)	LinkedIn	39
	Facebook	33
	Twitter	31
	MySpace	26

Sources: National Association of State Chief Information Officers, *Friends, Followers, and Feeds: A National Survey of Social Media Use in State Government* (Lexington, KY: NASCIO, Sep. 2010), accessed Feb. 2011, <http://www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO-SocialMedia.pdf>; Susannah Fox, Kathryn Zickuhr, and Aaron Smith, "Overview: Twitter and Status Updating, Fall 2009," Pew Internet & American Life Project, last modified Oct. 21, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/17-Twitter-and-Status-Updating-Fall-2009.aspx>.

Table 1.2: Demographics of Adults with Profiles on Social Networking Sites (2010)

Age	Percentage of Surveyed Adults with a Profile, by Social Networking Site (Pew, 2010)		
	Facebook	MySpace	LinkedIn
All Adults	73	48	14
18 to 29	71	66	7
30 and Older	75	36	19
Income	Facebook	MySpace	LinkedIn
\$50,000 per year or more	77	36	22
Less than \$50,000 per year	71	64	6
Education	Facebook	MySpace	LinkedIn
High school only	63	64	3
At least some college/university	78	41	19

Source: Amanda Lenhart, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, and Kathryn Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2010), p. 19, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

Meanwhile, limited data is available regarding race and ethnicity tendencies on popular social networking sites. Pew research (2010) on adults indicates that white users may be more likely to use Facebook and LinkedIn, while minority users may be more likely to have a profile on MySpace.⁵¹ Additional research demonstrates a similar pattern among college-age users and younger Americans as they self-select online communities

⁵¹ Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (2010), p. 19, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

that mirror their offline friendships, with a tendency toward homogeneity of education, race, age, and background.⁵²

SUMMARY

While this study is limited by the amount of data specifically available regarding the City of New Braunfels and its residents' usage of the Internet and social media, one can assume that Internet and social media use in New Braunfels does not differ significantly from that of the nation as a whole. This analysis is limited without precise numbers with respect to social media use by local residents. Therefore, in the future, public surveys may be necessary to derive better conclusions with respect to usage of social media tools. Nonetheless, similarities between the city population and those surveyed to study national social media trends support the exploration of social media by the government of New Braunfels. The following chapters discuss how the city could use social media to support each of its service goals.

⁵² S. Craig Watkins, *The Young and the Digital: What the Migration to Social-Network Sites, Games, and Anytime, Anywhere Media Means for Our Future* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2009), p. 96-97.

Chapter 2: Service Goal – Emergency Communications

Goal: Strengthen emergency management and communications service.

CURRENT PRACTICES AND TRENDS

Emergency Management in New Braunfels

The City of New Braunfels has an emergency management coordinator who handles the overall coordination for the city's emergency response, including the protocols and procedures used during crises.¹ In the event of a public emergency, the New Braunfels city manager is responsible for deciding whether or not to activate the emergency operations center (EOC), and control of the EOC may or may not fall to the emergency management coordinator, depending on the type of situation.² Concurrently, the city manager is responsible for empowering a city employee to serve as the public information officer (PIO) to provide updates and information related to the crisis.³

Throughout the crisis, the PIO serves as the liaison to television, radio, Internet, and print news sources and, in this capacity, disseminates the city message.⁴ Further, the PIO is responsible for ensuring that the crisis message presented to the public is consistent with the message desired by city administrators and the City Council.⁵ At present, the city manager may designate any employee serving in a marketing or communications capacity for this role.⁶ In particular, both the Fire and Police Departments have information officers who may be selected to be the primary PIO during

¹ E-mail from Deborah Korinchock, Support Services Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, "Emergency Management/Ops Protocol," to Jon Rogers, Apr. 24, 2011.

² Ibid.; Deborah Korinchock (Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, April 16, 2011.

³ Korinchock interview, Apr. 16, 2011.

⁴ E-mail from Deborah Korinchock, Support Services Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, "Emergency Management/Ops Protocol," to Jon Rogers, Apr. 23, 2011.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Korinchock interview, Apr. 16, 2011.

a crisis.⁷ As of May 2011, the city is in the process of hiring a full-time, central PIO who would be the designated manager of information sharing and media access in the event of an emergency or disaster scenario.⁸

Mobile Phones and Mobile Internet Access

As social media changes information access in our daily lives, it also changes reaction patterns and needs for emergency management planning. Baron (2009) relates amazement at the capacity for quick information and reaction among the mobile-Internet population. With respect to emergency planning, he observes: “With 350 million people walking around with sophisticated electronic news gathering equipment in their pockets tied directly to major news outlets, it is virtually impossible to be the original source of what is going on.”⁹ Modern emergency planning puts a premium on mobile information flow, as many tools are accessible by phones, and many critical operations could be enhanced by information gathering through virtual networks.¹⁰

Comprehensive data on the number of individuals who use social media to access emergency communication feeds is not available. However, research regarding mobile phone ownership and the use of mobile phones to access the Internet appears to support consideration of expanding emergency communication into social media platforms. By early 2007, more than 2.7 billion people subscribed to a mobile phone service – more than twice the number of landline users and twice the number of Internet users worldwide at that time – including 1.8 billion subscribers with short message service (SMS), or text

⁷ Korinchock interview, Apr. 16, 2011.

⁸ City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Public Information Officer,” city document: job description, revised date December 2010; E-mail from Julie O’Connell, Human Resources Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, “PIO Job Description,” to Jon Rogers, Feb. 16, 2011.

⁹ Gerald Baron, “Five Ways Social Media is Changing Emergency Management,” *Crisis Comm* (blog), Oct. 19, 2009, <http://www.emergencymgmt.com/emergency-blogs/crisis-comm/Five-Ways-Social-Media.html>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

messaging.¹¹ Pew surveys (2011) reveal that an estimated 85 percent of all Americans over the age of 18 own a mobile phone.¹² Pew studies (2010) indicate that the likelihood of mobile phone ownership increases with higher levels of education and household income, but the level of ownership among individuals earning less than \$30,000 annually was nonetheless 75 percent.¹³ The same studies also note that race and ethnicity did not appear to influence the likelihood of cell phone ownership.¹⁴ However, there are differences among age groups with respect to phone ownership. Figure 2.1 (below) illustrates trends in mobile phone ownership by age group.

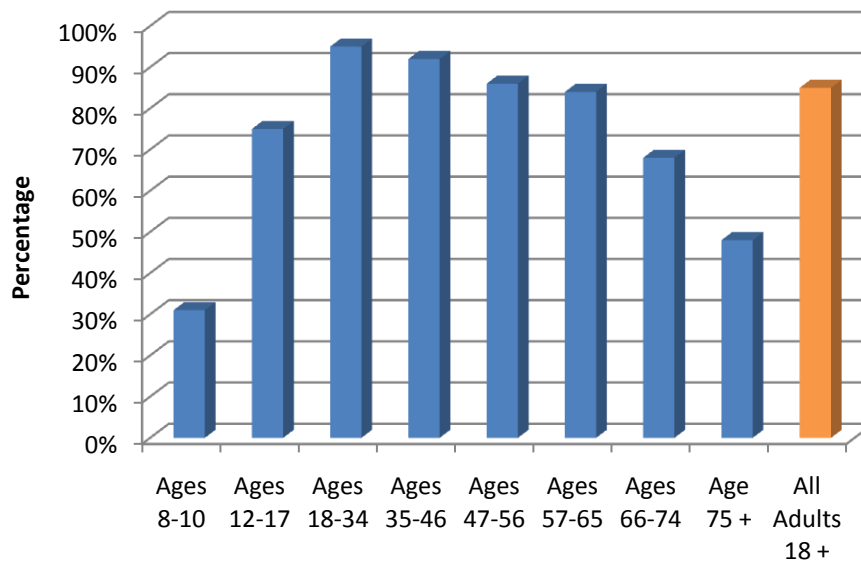
¹¹ Kent Wertime and Ian Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons – Asia, 2008), p. 150, 152.

¹² “Infographic: Generations, Mobile, Seniors: A closer look at generations and cell phone ownership,” Kathryn Zickuhr, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified Feb. 3, 2011, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/2011/Generations-and-cell-phones.aspx>.

¹³ Amanda Lenhart, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, and Kathryn Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2010), p. 11, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>; Note: By way of comparison, the study reference in this note found that 94 percent of adults with household incomes over \$75,000 were cell phone owners.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Figure 2.1: Estimated Percentage of Individuals United States Who Report Owning a Cellular Phone, by Age Group (2011)



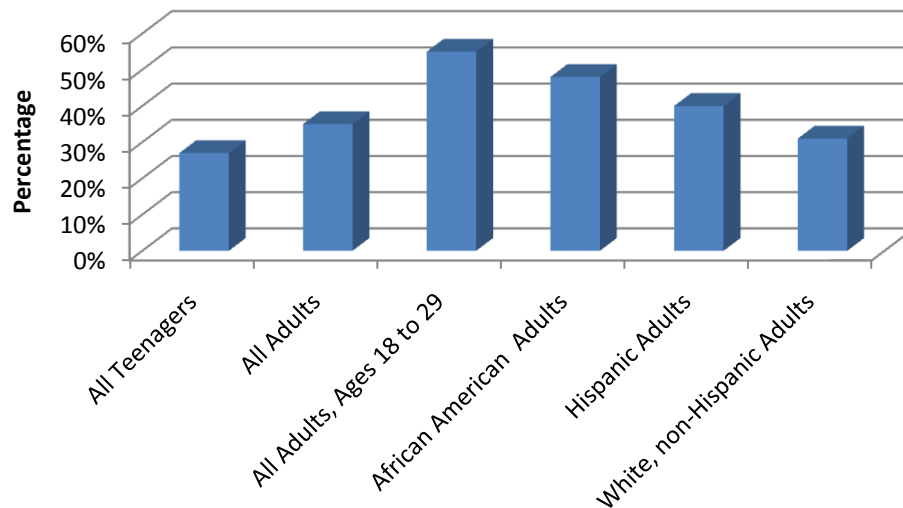
Source: [Adults] “Infographic: Generations, Mobile, Seniors: Generations and their gadgets,” Kathryn Zickuhr, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2011, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/2011/Generations-and-gadgets.aspx>; [Minors] Kimberlee Salmond and Kristen Purcell, “Trends in Teen Communication and Social Media Use: What’s Really Going On Here?” (webinar presentation, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, Washington, DC, Feb. 9, 2011). Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org>.

According to Pew, as of September 2009, an estimated 35 percent of adults and 27 percent of teenagers in the United States had accessed the Internet through their cell phones or other handheld devices.¹⁵ By 2010, 55 percent of all adults aged 18 to 29 had accessed the Internet using a cell phone, with the highest rate of access among African American adults.¹⁶ Figure 2.2 (below) illustrates research on categories of individuals who use a cellular phone to access the Internet for any reason.

¹⁵ Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (2010), p. 14, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Figure 2.2: Categories of Individuals in the United States Who Use a Cellular Phone to Access the Internet (2010)



Source: Amanda Lenhart, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, and Kathryn Zickuhr, *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 3, 2010), p. 14-15, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>.

Additional Pew research (2009) indicates that micromedia use increases with mobile phone ownership; as users accumulated more electronic devices capable of Internet access, Pew found that these individuals became more likely to use Twitter or another service for status updates.¹⁷ Similarly, Azua (2010) notes the growing demand for a wider variety of services via mobile devices, including e-mail, instant messaging, Internet browsing, and interactive/social computing services. With respect to social networking, she cites the frequent download and use of the MySpace mobile application in its early days of availability. Within the first month, beginning in November 2008, the

¹⁷ Susannah Fox, Kathryn Zickuhr, and Aaron Smith, "Overview: Twitter and Status Updating, Fall 2009," Pew Internet & American Life Project, last modified Oct. 21, 2009, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/17-Twitter-and-Status-Updating-Fall-2009.aspx>.

application had 1 million downloads, supported 15 million sent messages, and facilitated 2 million updates for online “mood” or “status.”¹⁸

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

At present, New Braunfels makes emergency management information available via electronic mail and/or text message to individuals who sign in to the city website and voluntarily select to receive the emergency management news flash.¹⁹ The same sign-in procedure could be extended to give citizens the option to receive similar content through a micromedia/microblogging application like Twitter or through Facebook status updates that could then be shared throughout individuals’ social networks. Other options could include a specific emergency communications application or blogging. All three possibilities are addressed in the following paragraphs.

Microblogging or Status-Sharing Applications

First, during crisis situations, microblogging applications like Twitter can be used to provide timely messages to the public.²⁰ Microblogging or micromedia status-sharing applications give individuals the opportunity to “follow” someone or an organization in practically real time, but with a precise and concise nature not characteristic of press releases or traditional blogs.²¹ Taking Twitter as an example, the website limits posts (or “tweets”) to 140 characters or less.²² Yet, microblogging still enables the capacity for

¹⁸ Maria Azua, *The Social Factor: Innovate, Ignite, and Win through Mass Collaboration and Social Networking* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: IBM Press/Pearson Plc, 2010), p. 197, 200-201.

¹⁹ “Notify Me,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/list.aspx?Mode=Subscribe#newsFlash>.

²⁰ Blake Newman, “Government/Nonprofit Policy: Use of Social Media: Why government and nonprofit organizations should set up Social Media Profiles,” InQbation (online), last modified Oct. 12, 2009, accessed Feb. 24, 2011, <http://www.inqbation.com/government-policy-on-the-use-of-social-media>.

²¹ Brian Solis and Deirdre Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/FT Press, 2009), p. 179.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

sharing files, pictures, videos, or other links.²³ In many cases, messages used in other communications channels (for examples, for traditional press releases) could be repurposed and tailored to the context of a social media platform.²⁴

In the City of Fort Worth, Texas, the senior administrator for public affairs believes that increasing the size of networks on social media before emergencies occur can translate into a ready-made followership when a crisis actually occurs.²⁵ After implementing Twitter and Facebook, among others, into their communications efforts, Fort Worth administrators found that social media engagement contributed to improved public attention and communication structures during an emergency event.²⁶ Similarly, although at the federal level, the Federal Emergency Management Agency uses Twitter feeds to convey information through its regional offices and includes photographic and video materials prepared specifically for viewing on different Internet platforms, including mobile devices.²⁷ Sander (2008) states that social media technologies make it possible and desirable for citizens to find information through their social networks instead of more formal or traditional communications channels.²⁸ One possible advantage to using currently popular status-sharing tools like Facebook is that many

²³ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 179.

²⁴ Jeremiah Owyang, "How Municipalities Should Integrate Social Media Into Disaster Planning," *Web-Strategist* (blog), Dec. 1, 2008, <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/12/01/how-municipalities-should-integrate-social-media-into-disaster-planning/>.

²⁵ Jason Lamers (Media and Public Affairs Manager, City of Fort Worth, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Mar. 3, 2011.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Alyssa Rosenberg, "FEMA takes open approach to social media," *Government Executive* (online), last modified Jul. 6, 2009, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0709/070609ar1.htm.

²⁸ Todd Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (Government Technology's Digital Communities, 2008), p. 3, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

citizens may already have profiles on these sites, requiring less effort by the public to access city information.²⁹

Although their content typically does not constitute what might be considered a public crisis, the Comal Independent School District (ISD) in New Braunfels and two of the city departments use their social media feeds to post program updates and schedule changes. In the event of a public emergency, these entities have social media channels that could be leveraged to spread information through their respective audiences. With more than 1,000 Facebook fans,³⁰ Comal ISD uses social media content extensively and integrates its channels (Facebook, Twitter, and RSS) into its central website, in addition to an Apple-developed application for iPads, iPods, and iPhones.³¹ The ISD uses its social media to provide school calendar notices, updates on events and school closings, budget updates, and solicitations for school awards, and its short postings are used to drive users back to more comprehensive material on the homepage.³² Similarly, the New Braunfels Public Library and the city Parks and Recreation department use Facebook and, to a much lesser degree, Twitter to keep their social networks advised about upcoming programs, events, and facility closings.³³

²⁹ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 18; Government Technology, *A How-To Guide for Creating Open Government* (2010), p. 12, 19, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media2.govtech.com/documents/gt_765331_How_To.pdf; Charlene Li, "Transforming Cities Using Social Media," (annual meeting presentation, League of California Cities, July 30, 2009), accessed Mar. 2011, <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>.

³⁰ "Comal ISD," Facebook page of Comal Independent School District, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/comalisd>.

³¹ "Comal Independent School District," website of Comal Independent School District, New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.comalisd.org>.

³² "Comal ISD," Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/comalisd>.

³³ Kit Ward-Crixell (Librarian, New Braunfels Public Library, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 15, 2011; Stacey Laird-Dicke (Director, Parks and Recreation, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 18, 2011.

Online community engagement through micromedia and status-sharing applications could enhance offline awareness throughout the crisis situation. For example, Amber Alerts are now published on Facebook as a method for drawing more community interest, generating notifications, and facilitating information sharing behind the mission of heightening vigilance toward the location of missing persons.³⁴ At the time of publication, the Texas Amber Alerts Facebook page has more than 21,000 “Likes,” or online fans, although the number of successful recoveries due to Facebook information is unclear.³⁵ Similarly, the City of Seattle, Washington, uses social networking applications to alert its citizens to criminal-watch needs or disaster warnings. With the same tools, the city has the potential to bridge its online community into offline groups that engage in neighborhood block watch efforts or disaster recovery crews.³⁶

Public Alert Applications

Second, beyond micromedia or status-sharing applications, a city may prefer to use specific public alert applications for emergency communications. Several cities in Texas, including those considered benchmarks for the New Braunfels, elect to use these applications to complement other social media. Greater detail on the city’s comparison set can be found in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, among the cities with which New Braunfels compares itself, four use Nixle, a service for government agencies and small-to-medium sized businesses to transmit multimedia, including real-time public alerts, through a

³⁴ Lauren Katims, “Amber Alerts Now Available on Facebook,” *Government Technology* (online), last modified Jan. 13, 2011, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/public-safety/Amber-Alerts-Now-Available-on-Facebook.html>.

³⁵ “Texas AMBER Alert,” Facebook, accessed Apr. 25, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/AMBERAlertTX>.

³⁶ Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (2008), p. 5, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf; Owyang, “How Municipalities Should Integrate Social Media Into Disaster Planning,” *Web-Strategist* (blog), <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/12/01/how-municipalities-should-integrate-social-media-into-disaster-planning/>.

“trusted mobile platform.”³⁷ Also in Texas, active social media cities Fort Worth and Corpus Christi use Nixle for public safety alerts, and Corpus Christi has developed separate applications through CrimeReports.com and CitizenObserver.com that are designed for mobile phones with Internet capabilities.³⁸ Like other social media tools, these applications can be featured on the city website to provide citizens with convenient information and easier sign-in procedures.³⁹ For reference, Appendix C provides screenshot examples of two cities comparable to New Braunfels that integrate emergency communications applications on their websites.

In a similar manner, the City of Manor, Texas, and the City of San Jose, California, are using mobile-based applications for the reporting of non-emergency city problems. Manor uses a blog-styled website that allows public comments and provides convenient connections to RSS, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube.⁴⁰ In addition to these tools, the city is using a mobile-based platform called SeeClickFix to allow citizens to submit and view neighborhood issues.⁴¹ Likewise, San Jose provides an application that citizens can use to take photos of city problems (e.g., refuse on city streets), upload the photos, and add descriptive text or data about the photo location.⁴² While these applications have not been tested for emergency use, their services could be possible tools for the real-time communication of city issues from citizen to government.

³⁷ “About Nixle,” Nixle, LLC, last modified 2011, accessed Mar. 15, 2011, <http://www.nixle.com/about.html>.

³⁸ Lamers interview, Mar. 3, 2011; Michael Armstrong (Chief Information Officer, City of Corpus Christi, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 22, 2011.

³⁹ “The Town of Flower Mound, Texas,” Town of Flower Mound, Texas, website, accessed Apr. 25, 2011, <http://www.flower-mound.com/index.php>.

⁴⁰ “City of Manor, State of Texas Beta,” City of Manor, Texas, accessed Feb. 22, 2011, <http://cityofmanor.org/wordpress>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Li, “Transforming Cities Using Social Media,” (2009), <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>.

Blogs

Third, a city could adopt a blog for emergency communications. Using a study of blog functions during Hurricane Katrina, Macias, et al. (2009), find that blog posting during an emergency follows four trends: communication (i.e., looking for missing or calls for rescue), political (i.e., commenting on government response), information (i.e., providing official news), or helping (i.e., providing social support or organizing assistance).⁴³ Their research finds that blogs established in advance of a crisis, with regularly scheduled posting to attract an audience, could provide a source of reliable online information for individuals in crisis.⁴⁴ Albeit at the federal level, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) uses a blog to share information and address concerns about transportation security and technology.⁴⁵ As a result of its audience development and engagement, even in response to harsh public criticism, the TSA blog has received commendation from public and private sector industry leaders in public relations.⁴⁶ In the event of a crisis, this forum could be leveraged to reach out to existing followers.

In an emergency, social media channels, including blogs, provide municipalities with a potential outlet for official data during a crisis. Therefore, citizens with access to city social media profiles may opt for city social media instead of competing (and possibly less accurate) information.⁴⁷ Macias, et al. (2009), recommend that crisis

⁴³ Wendy Macias, Karen Hilyard, and Vicki Freimuth, "Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15 (2009): 11.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁵ *The TSA Blog* (blog), last accessed Feb. 24, 2011, <http://blog.tsa.gov>.

⁴⁶ B. Leilani Martinez (New Media Manager, Center for New Media and Citizen Engagement, United States General Services Administration), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 23, 2011; *The TSA Blog* (blog), <http://blog.tsa.gov>.

⁴⁷ Kim Stephens, "Crisis data, it's not just for response organizations," *IDisaster 2.0: Social Media and Emergency Management* (blog), Mar. 21, 2011, <https://idisaster.wordpress.com/2011/03/21/crisis-data-from-and-for-impacted-communities/>.

communicators assist online searchers by using popular keywords and tags to guide search engines to the official blog.⁴⁸ They also support careful monitoring of both the official and unofficial blogs to collect information and respond to pleas for help.⁴⁹ During a public crisis, other blogs relevant to the community could support the dissemination of official information.⁵⁰

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Social media remains a possible complement to other media communication channels (e.g., print, radio, and television), but – in its current state of user adoption – is not a total replacement for traditional media.⁵¹ While social media provides a possible option for enhancing emergency communication, there are unresolved issues to be considered, including communication team preparedness, message control, and access to social media during a crisis.

Team Preparedness

Emergency management can be enhanced by the ability of social media platforms to communicate directly with millions without waiting for traditional media coverage.⁵² Coupled with the capabilities of mobile phones to access the Internet, social media could provide an opportunity to reach the public when power lines may be down.⁵³ During a crisis, more citizens may be looking to the city for help, and they may express highly

⁴⁸ Macias, Hilyard, and Freimuth, “Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina,” (2009): 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵¹ Lamers interview, Mar. 3, 2011; Armstrong interview, Feb. 22, 2011.

⁵² Baron, “Five Ways Social Media is Changing Emergency Management,” *Crisis Comm* (blog), <http://www.emergencymgmt.com/emergency-blogs/crisis-comm/Five-Ways-Social-Media.html>.

⁵³ Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 27, 2011.

emotional pleas, comments, or criticisms through social networks.⁵⁴ Further, government entities may experience a dramatic increase in their follower networks during a crisis. For example, the County of Maui, Hawaii, experienced a 700 percent increase in its Facebook fan base during a recent tsunami as individuals sought information on the path of the storm and its aftermath.⁵⁵ If the City of New Braunfels activates emergency communications through social media, it could receive traffic from residents of the surrounding Comal and Guadalupe Counties, neither of which offers social media communication in any form.⁵⁶

As a result, staff tasked with servicing social media are likely to require specialized training on appropriate response protocols, handling dialogue that escalates by emotion or need, addressing negative comments, and providing timely and informative responses.⁵⁷ As with other elements of crisis planning, careful consideration of social media guidelines and training can help staff to identify points at which breakdowns and problems might occur in emergency communications.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Macias, Hilyard, and Freimuth, "Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina," (2009): 28.

⁵⁵ Kim Stephens, "Social Media and the Japan earthquake: What we can learn," *IDisaster 2.0: Social Media and Emergency Management* (blog), Mar. 12, 2011, <http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2011/03/12/social-media-and-the-japan-earthquake-and-tsunami-what-we-can-learn/>.

⁵⁶ "Comal County, Texas," website of Comal County, Texas, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.co.comal.tx.us/>; "Welcome To Guadalupe County, Texas," website of Guadalupe County, Texas, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.co.guadalupe.tx.us/guadalupe2010/>.

⁵⁷ Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011; Patrick Kerley, "Six@Six: 6 Tips for Creating an Effective Facebook Engagement Policy," *Bulletproof Blog: The Blog on Crisis Communications* (blog), Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.bulletproofblog.com/2011/02/08/sixsix-six-tips-for-creating-an-effective-facebook-engagement-policy>.

⁵⁸ Valeria Maltoni, "Crisis Communications in Social Media: Are You Ready?" *Conversation Agent* (blog), Jun. 20, 2010, <http://www.conversationagent.com/2010/06/crisis-communications-in-social-media-are-you-ready.html>.

Message Control

Considering the potential for more questions and followers during a crisis, as noted above, a city may find that rapid information is necessary to address concerns as the emergency situation unfolds.⁵⁹ Therefore, the size of the team appointed to control social media and their autonomy or freedom to respond to concerns could have an impact on social media messaging during a crisis. Several studies related to municipal and company use of social media stress the importance of getting the correct social media “team” together, with close ties between administrators, information officers, and information technology staff,⁶⁰ and a clear chain of command regarding the posting and editing of information.⁶¹ Because of the timeliness associated with responses to comments or questions, Kerley (2010) notes that microblogging or blogging may be better suited for situations or communications teams in which more posting and responding autonomy is allowed.⁶²

While granting a small group of information officials control over city social media messaging may protect message consistency during a crisis, certain departments may need the freedom to post freely and immediately during emergencies. For example, in Corpus Christi, Texas, the chief information officer works alongside public

⁵⁹ Kim Stephens, “Using Corporate Social Media Lessons for Emergency Management ‘Marketing,’” *IDisaster 2.0: Social Media and Emergency Management* (blog), Feb. 17, 2011, <http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2011/02/17/using-corporate-social-media-lessons-for-emergency-management-marketing/>.

⁶⁰ Gerald C. Kane, Robert C. Fichman, John Gallaughier, and John Glaser, “Community Relations 2.0,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 2009, p. 6; Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 14.

⁶¹ Webber interview, Feb. 11, 2011; Andy Opsahl, “Government Execs Discuss Strategies for Updating Social Media Accounts,” *Government Technology* (online), last modified Jan. 18, 2011, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Government-Strategies-Social-Media-Accounts.html>.

⁶² Patrick Kerley, “Six@Six: 6 Questions to Ask Before Engaging in a Social Media Platform,” *Bulletproof Blog: The Blog on Crisis Communications* (blog), Feb. 16, 2010, <http://www.bulletproofblog.com/2010/02/16/six-six-6-questions-to-ask-before-engaging-in-a-social-media-platform/>.

information officials in the Police and Emergency Services departments to ensure that crisis communication is timely and appropriate.⁶³ To date, both are allowed to provide immediate information over social media through their public information officials.⁶⁴ However, in the event of a large-scale emergency, challenges could emerge in coordinating quick responses from established department social media responses with those authorized by central city administrators.

Access

A municipality seeking to protect against a “digital divide” likely will need to continue to support its social media content with traditional media.⁶⁵ Roughly 15 percent of the adult population in the United States does not own a mobile phone, and an estimated 21 percent of the same population does not use the Internet at all, regardless of device.⁶⁶ For additional information, Appendix D illustrates reasons why adults choose not to access the Internet. Pew research (2011) indicates that adults living with a disability are less likely to access the Internet (approximately 54 percent overall) or have access to broadband service, and 2 percent of adults in the United States report that their illness or disability makes Internet use completely or almost impossible.⁶⁷ Of note,

⁶³ Armstrong interview, Feb. 22, 2011.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (2008), p. 7, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf; Stephanie Weiss, *Risk Management Information: Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations* (St. Paul, MN: League of Minnesota Cities, 2009), p. 3.

⁶⁶ “Infographic: Generations, Mobile, Seniors: A closer look at generations and cell phone ownership,” Kathryn Zickuhr, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified Feb. 3, 2011, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/2011/Generations-and-cell-phones.aspx>; Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 6, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

⁶⁷ Susannah Fox, *Americans living with disability and their technology profile*, (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Jan. 21, 2011), p. 2-3, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Disability.aspx>.

among all adults, another 10 percent of the population considers Internet access to be too expensive to obtain.⁶⁸ Therefore, a city cannot assume that emergency communications information shared via social media channels will be received by the full intended audience.

SUMMARY

Social media could be used to complement existing emergency management communications in New Braunfels. Data regarding the ownership of mobile phones and the use of these devices to connect to the Internet, combined with growing interest in social media, supports the exploration of social media for crisis communications. Three types of social media applications (microblogs/status-sharing applications, public alert applications, and blogs) present possible options for the use of social media to support emergency communications. Meanwhile, communications team preparedness, message control, and public access to social media are potentially unresolved issues that could hinder the success of social media during a crisis.

⁶⁸ Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (2010), p. 6,
http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

Chapter 3: Service Goal – Message Management

Goal: Use new media to serve as direct-to-citizen news entity.

CURRENT STATUS OF CITY MEDIA COVERAGE AND INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Area Media

The City of New Braunfels receives regular media coverage from its local newspaper and stations, in addition to San Antonio and Austin-area media. Local newspaper coverage comes from the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, with additional reporting from the *San Antonio Express-News* and the *Austin American-Statesman*.¹ Television news coverage comes from San Antonio affiliates, and radio coverage comes from local stations KGNB/AM and KNBT/FM.² While this study does not have comprehensive data on media mentions of the government and its departments, the use of Google Alerts³ demonstrates the number of times a city department is mentioned across the websites of news outlets over a period of time. For example, between February 8 and April 8, 2011, the New Braunfels city government or one of its departments was mentioned 179 times across approximately forty online news sources, with KGNB AM New Braunfels (online) accounting for more than one-third of the city's online news coverage.⁴ Appendix E provides additional information regarding online city media mentions.

¹ The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc., *2011 Official Guide to New Braunfels: Business, Relocation, & Visitor's Guide* (New Braunfels, TX: Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, 2011), p. 16.

² Ibid., p. 16.

³ "Google alerts beta," Google, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

⁴ Note: One or more of the city's departments was mentioned in approximately 155 stories identified through Google Alerts during the period of Feb. 8-Apr. 8, 2011. As some stories involved multiple departments, 179 departments or city entities were identified within the stories noted above. More information with respect to methodology is included in

City Public Access Channel

The city puts content on a public-access television channel, but it is available only to area subscribers of Time Warner Cable.⁵ Maintenance for the channel is handled by the city Information Technology staff, and content includes municipal job vacancies, the names and pictures of City Council members, addresses of city facilities, and only occasional updates to its PowerPoint slide format.⁶ At times, the public access channel is used to broadcast recorded footage from City Council or Planning and Zoning Board meetings. Video of public deliberations is neither provided as streaming video online nor uploaded on the city website after its broadcast on public access, but citizens may obtain copies of the recordings on DVD through an open records request.⁷

City Website

At present, the City of New Braunfels has a predominantly static website. Typically, the pages assigned to its city departments have an overview, contact information, and relevant quick links or calendars, but few of the department websites host any sort of information interaction for the public.⁸ Of the exceptions, the New Braunfels Public Library uses its department website to give citizens the chance to become fans of the Library on Facebook;⁹ Parks and Recreation provides a voluntary sign-up for its electronic newsletter and has program guides available for download;¹⁰

⁵ Danny Batts (Deputy City Secretary, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Mar. 1, 2011.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “City of New Braunfels,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, website, accessed Apr. 26, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/>.

⁹ “Library,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?nid=114>.

¹⁰ “Parks and Recreation,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Apr. 26, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?nid=154>.

and the Police Department provides links to a recruiting video, online police reports, and crime data on Crimeweb.net and CrimeReports.com.¹¹

Additionally, ten of the thirteen city departments with websites offer citizens the opportunity to email the department director or a designee directly, and – of the other three – the Police and Fire Departments provide electronic contact forms for reaching officials within the respective departments.¹² The city also provides a central contact form for reaching any one (or more) of twenty-one agencies, including City Council.¹³ None of the department websites or the central page have sections for citizens to provide comments that are available for public viewing, and the city does not host a blog on its own web infrastructure or through another website.

The city does allow website visitors to sign up, with an e-mail address or phone number, for “Notify Me” lists that correspond to various city functions.¹⁴ Individuals can select to receive information related to specific services or programs (e.g., the City Council Agenda); full-time, part-time, and seasonal job opportunities for city departments; changes or additions to the city event calendar, including programs and events specific to certain departments (e.g., Parks and Recreation); emergency management news; and other general news updates.¹⁵ The various channels of information allow the user to personalize information received. Additionally, the city assures its patrons that e-mail addresses “will be kept confidential” and will not “be sold,

¹¹ “Police Department,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=321>.

¹² “Fire Department,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=304>; “Police Department,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=321>.

¹³ “Contact Us,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/forms.aspx?fid=87>.

¹⁴ “Notify Me,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/list.aspx?Mode=Subscribe#newsFlash>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

disclosed to others, or used for unsolicited mass mailings (spam).”¹⁶ In addition, New Braunfels provides tailored information through RSS feeds, including city alerts and notices about events by department.¹⁷

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

According to Kingsley (2010), cities often enter social media channels as a way of fighting against negative or non-existent coverage of local government by the local press.¹⁸ For example, administrators in the City of Fort Worth, Texas, have discovered that social media offers the chance to shape the city message without the spin, misinformation, or sensationalism more recently characteristic of traditional news providers.¹⁹ With respect to New Braunfels, the Google Alerts research in Appendix E indicates that coverage of the city online is sporadic within news outlets, including the city paper, and content tends to focus on Police Department operations and crime reports.

While New Braunfels lacks a central presence on any of social media platforms, including the currently popular websites Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, or Flickr, several of the cities against which New Braunfels compares itself have entered social media to expand their communications operations. Based on the experience of its benchmark cities and the justification for social media presented in Chapter 1, the city could justify entering one or more of the most popular sites as a means of going where its

¹⁶ “Notify Me,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/list.aspx?Mode=Subscribe#newsFlash>.

¹⁷ “RSS Feeds,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/rss.aspx#rssCivicAlerts>.

¹⁸ Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 5.

¹⁹ Jason Lamers (Media and Public Affairs Manager, City of Fort Worth, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Mar. 3, 2011.

citizens already are.²⁰ The following paragraphs note the city's hiring of an information officer tasked with monitoring social media, present thoughts on a city brand audit within social media channels, and consider social media applications in which the city's comparators and other municipalities communicate with their respective populations.

Public Information Officer

The city is taking steps toward social media development with the hiring of a full-time, permanent Public Information Officer (PIO). As of May 2011, the hiring process is not complete. When hired, this individual will “[coordinate] the dissemination of news, both written and verbal, that originates within the City [and communicate] with the public and the media to ensure that the City’s key messages reach the public.”²¹ In addition to the PIO’s responsibilities with respect to developing and maintaining the city’s marketing efforts and relationships with local and regional media and the community, the PIO will “[utilize] state-of-the art, cost effective technology to creatively and effectively communicate with the public; [and oversee] the development of strategies and material for the City website, intranet, cable access channel, social media and e-government business applications.”²² Per the city’s job description, the PIO will be required to have knowledge of “social media tools, audio visual production and photography” among his

²⁰ Brian Solis and Deirdre Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/FT Press, 2009), p. 18; Government Technology, *A How-To Guide for Creating Open Government* (2010), p. 19, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media2.govtech.com/documents/gt_765331_How_To.pdf; Charlene Li, “Transforming Cities Using Social Media,” (annual meeting presentation, League of California Cities, July 30, 2009), accessed Mar. 2011, <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>; Rahaf Harfoush, *Yes We Did: An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand* (Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2009), p. 144; Federal Web Managers Council, *Putting Citizens First: Transforming Online Government, A White Paper Written for the 2008-2009 Presidential Transition Team* (Washington, DC: Federal Web Managers Council, November 2008), p. 2.

²¹ City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Public Information Officer,” city document: job description, revised date December 2010.

²² Ibid.

or her skill set.²³ With the hiring of an individual tasked specifically with the design and development of social media, the city administration appears willing to begin its approach into social media applications.

Online Brand Audit

Under the new PIO, before making a determination on which social media channels to enter, the city's first endeavor might be a survey of attitudes toward New Braunfels within blogs and existing social media networks.²⁴ In a study of the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama, Lutz (2009) observes that, in the early stages of social media development, an audit of conversations about a person or entity could help to develop online credibility through better understanding of external perceptions.²⁵ Similarly, Kane, et al. (2009), recommend that communities monitor existing dialogues and reach out to community leaders online as first steps toward developing a social media message.²⁶

One tool in particular, found at KnowEm.com, could be useful for quickly searching names or keywords (e.g., New Braunfels) across various types of social media platforms to determine whether a city name has been claimed and, if so, what sort of information is being transmitted by its owner.²⁷ For example, among the nineteen most popular social media sites, only nine had "New Braunfels" as an available user name, and ten had "NewBraunfels" available.²⁸ Whether or not New Braunfels begins social

²³ City of New Braunfels, Texas, "Public Information Officer," city document: job description, revised date December 2010.

²⁴ Sarah Evans, "Social Media for Business: The Dos and Don'ts of Sharing," Mashable, last modified Feb. 27, 2009, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://mashable.com/2009/02/27/social-media-for-business-2/>.

²⁵ Monte Lutz, *The Social Pulpit: Barack Obama's Social Media Toolkit* (Washington, DC: Edelman Digital Public Affairs, 2009), p. 11.

²⁶ Gerald C. Kane, Robert C. Fichman, John Gallagher, and John Glaser, "Community Relations 2.0," *Harvard Business Review*, November 2009, p. 6.

²⁷ Name searches at KnowEm.com, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://knowem.com/>.

²⁸ Ibid.

media use in the short term, city administrators could sign up for various services as a means of claiming the city identity to protect its name reputation in the online community.²⁹ More information on KnowEm, New Braunfels user profiles, and URL domain names is available in Appendix F.

Examining Social Media Use by Market Comparators

In 2007, the City of New Braunfels commissioned Public Sector Personnel Consultants of Scottsdale, Arizona, to develop a list of “market comparators,” defined as Texas towns and cities against which New Braunfels is competitive on salaries and benefits, with additional consideration of population size (roughly 40,000 to 80,000) and proximity to major metropolitan areas (e.g., San Antonio, Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Houston).³⁰ Based on the agreed-upon criteria, the list of towns and cities identified as market comparators included the following eighteen locations: Allen, Baytown, Bedford, Euless, Flower Mound, Galveston, Grapevine, Haltom City, Lewisville, McKinney, North Richland Hills, Port Arthur, Round Rock, Rowlett, San Marcos, Temple, and The Woodlands.³¹

In June 2010, while working as a staff member for the city, the author of this study analyzed the market comparators to determine the extent to which each used social media services (specifically, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube), RSS feeds, and streaming video as part of their public outreach.³² If the city did not post a link that guided users from city website to the social media channel, any materials found on social

²⁹ Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011.

³⁰ Mark Weatherly, “Market Comparators” (memorandum from Public Sector Personnel Consultants to the City Council, City of New Braunfels, Texas, May 8, 2007).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Jon Rogers, “Digital/Social Media Use Among Market Comparators” (memorandum to Deborah Korinchock, Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas, June 15, 2010).

media channels were examined for official authenticity (i.e., appropriate city contact information) to ensure that they were posted by city administrators.³³ Table 3.1 (below) summarizes the major findings of the social media comparison between New Braunfels and its market comparators. Within the table, when at least one or more departments use social media, the column is noted as “Dept. Only.”

Table 3.1: A Social Media Comparison of New Braunfels and Eighteen Texas Towns and Cities (2010)

	Facebook	Twitter	Flickr	YouTube	RSS
New Braunfels	Dept. Only	Dept. Only	No	No	Yes
Georgetown	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
San Marcos	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Round Rock	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Temple	Dept. Only	No	Dept. Only	Dept. Only	Yes
Allen	Yes	Dept. Only	No	Yes	Yes
Bedford	Yes	No	Yes	Dept. Only	No
Eules	No	No	No	No	Yes
Flower Mound	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grapevine	No	No	No	No	Yes
Haltom City	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Lewisville	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
McKinney	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
North Richland Hills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Rowlett	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baytown	No	Yes	No	No	No
Galveston	No	No	No	No	No
Port Arthur	Dept. Only	No	No	No	No
The Woodlands	No	No	No	No	Yes
Total “Yes”	10	10	6	6	12
Plus Dept. Only	3	1	1	2	0
TOTALS	13	11	7	8	12

Source: Jon Rogers, “Digital/Social Media Use Among Market Comparators” (memorandum to Deborah Korinchock, Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas, June 15, 2010).

³³ Jon Rogers, “Digital/Social Media Use Among Market Comparators” (memorandum to Deborah Korinchock, Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas, June 15, 2010).

Not including the department-only social media use, Table 3.1 shows that ten comparators are using Facebook, ten are using Twitter, six are sharing photographs on Flickr, and six are uploading videos on YouTube. Since the conclusion of the market comparator social media survey, one additional city (Grapevine) has developed a presence on Facebook and Twitter, leaving only Euless, Galveston, Temple, and Port Arthur, and The Woodlands as the only other benchmark cities not to have a central social media presence on at least one of the four selected webstes.³⁴ Of note, although The Woodlands official page did not link to social media, its separately sponsored residents' website did include links for Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter.³⁵

Instead of, or in addition to, the four popular social media sites considered, New Braunfels's market comparators are using other, relevant applications to provide information and content to their citizens. Table 3.2 (below) summarizes the additional social media tools used by the market comparators. In addition, Rowlett, Flower Mound, and Lewisville use their central websites to offer quick and easy-to-locate links to social media resources (including at least Facebook, Twitter, RSS, web-based video-sharing, photo-sharing, and streaming-video content) and to provide the option for citizens to share city-sponsored content with their personal networks.³⁶

³⁴ "Grapevine, Texas," City of Grapevine, Texas, website, accessed Apr. 25, 2011, <http://www.grapevinetexas.gov/>.

³⁵ Rogers, "Digital/Social Media Use Among Market Comparators" (memorandum, Jun. 15, 2010).

³⁶ Jon Rogers, "2010.digital_media_survey.xlsx" (Excel document to accompany memorandum to Deborah Korinchock, Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas, Jun. 15, 2010).

Table 3.2: Other Social Media Tools Used by Market Comparators (2010)

Social Media	Function	Comparators Using
Blackboard Connect	Public notification system	Port Arthur
Nixle	Public alert application	Euless, Flower Mound, Grapevine, Haltom City
Photobucket	Photo sharing	Lewisville
Vimeo	Video sharing	Haltom City

Source: Jon Rogers, “Digital/Social Media Use Among Market Comparators” (memorandum to Deborah Korinchock, Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas, June 15, 2010).

While the City of New Braunfels could choose to pursue social media in completely different channels, reviewing the tools used by market comparators offers one perspective on what benchmark cities are currently using to facilitate their own communications strategies. However, a limitation of this study is the lack of insight regarding the motivations and metrics used by each of the market comparators as part of their social media strategies. In regard to national trends, Pew research (2011) indicates that citizens who engage more with news online are more likely to be active in the community and perceive a positive impact from their activities.³⁷ Building upon the tools presented by the market comparators, the following paragraphs offer additional information on how micromedia, photo and video sharing, and blogging could be used to support media messaging in New Braunfels.

Micromedia

Micromedia (or microblogging), e.g., Twitter, provides one possible approach for guiding media messages online. Restrictions on characters in microblogging require reducing content to a concise length, which requires skill on the part of content authors to

³⁷ Lee Rainie, Kristen Purcell, Tony Siesfeld, and Mayur Patel, *How the Public Perceives Community Information Systems* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Mar. 1, 2011), p. 1, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/08-Community-Information-Systems.aspx>.

focus on the most precise and compelling information for their audiences.³⁸ Solis and Breakenridge (2009) suggest that, if organizations choose not to use micromedia for communication purposes, they could be missing out on a popular method of reaching the public with a focused organization message.³⁹ Also, according to Sternstein (2010), citizens reached through micromedia may be more likely to offer quick feedback and share content (on Twitter, “re-tweets”) through their own social networks.⁴⁰

Studies differ on exactly which materials are appropriate for sharing through micromedia (e.g., whether or how often to share press releases in a condensed fashion),⁴¹ but Kingsley (2010) notes that if posts are brief, conversational, and link citizens to more thorough information elsewhere, they are more likely to be received as appropriately “social” for social media.⁴² Additionally, microblogging provides a potential capacity to respond quickly to misinformation or rumors associated with a municipality while sharing links back to helpful, guiding information on the city’s website.⁴³

Based on his case study of Columbus, Ohio, Landsbergen (2010) offers potential metrics that could be used to measure the impact of micromedia (in his example, Twitter)

³⁸ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 71.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 184.

⁴⁰ Aliya Sternstein, “Management Matters: Twitter Ties,” *Government Executive* (online), last modified Nov. 10, 2010, accessed Mar. 3, 2010, http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/1110/111010mm.htm.

⁴¹ Blake Newman, “Government/Nonprofit Policy: Use of Social Media: Why government and nonprofit organizations should set up Social Media Profiles,” InQbation (online), last modified Oct. 12, 2009, accessed Feb. 24, 2011, <http://www.inqbation.com/government-policy-on-the-use-of-social-media>; Andy Opsahl, “Government Execs Discuss Strategies for Updating Social Media Accounts,” *Government Technology* (online), last modified Jan. 18, 2011, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Government-Strategies-Social-Media-Accounts.html>.

⁴² Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 19.

⁴³ Opsahl, “Government Execs Discuss Strategies for Updating Social Media Accounts,” *Government Technology* (online), <http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Government-Strategies-Social-Media-Accounts.html>; Sternstein, “Management Matters: Twitter Ties,” *Government Executive* (online), http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/1110/111010mm.htm.

in reaching communications objectives.⁴⁴ He suggests that cities could determine the “reach” of their online messaging by measuring city Twitter followers, observing the “relevance” of followers added, and monitoring referrals from Twitter to city website content.⁴⁵ Additionally, Landsbergen proposes that follower feedback on Twitter could be used to determine the success of live event coverage and whether or not the city’s online “voice” is appropriate and engaging.⁴⁶

Photo and Video Sharing

One possible benefit of using photo and video sharing services on social media is the ability to share one product across several channels. On its website, the City of New Braunfels provides a small amount of video content, including one “quick tour” video and another affiliated with the work of the Police Department.⁴⁷ However, the posted videos include neither connections to social media channels nor incentives for viewers to take the videos to share across social networks.⁴⁸ Potentially, photo and video sharing channels and content can be tied together through cross-promotion across social and traditional media advertising,⁴⁹ and segments of material could be posted in several places. For example, a video produced for YouTube could be shared through Twitter and Facebook, streamed on the public access channel, and uploaded to the city website. In Fort Worth, Texas, city communications officials found that they could rejuvenate the city’s website, Vimeo (video sharing) channel, and public access cable channel

⁴⁴ David Landsbergen, “Government as Part of the Revolution: Using Social Media to Achieve Public Goals,” *Electronic Journal of e-Government* 8, no. 2 (2010): 145.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁷ “Take a Quick Tour of New Braunfels,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=998>; “Police Department: Employment Opportunities,” City of New Braunfels, Texas, accessed Mar. 22, 2011, <http://nbtexas.org/index.aspx?NID=920&ART=2183&admin=1>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 16.

simultaneously by focusing solely on short format video that could be produced once, but distributed numerous times across a variety of platforms.⁵⁰

The types of photo and video content shared by cities and their departments may vary, depending on intent, and this study is limited in its ability to match content effort to measurable results. In one example specific to the city, the New Braunfels Parks and Recreation Department uses photo uploads to showcase events sponsored by the department to encourage local participation.⁵¹ In another example highlighted as a best practice by Sander (2008), Denver, Colorado, created its own YouTube channel to post promotional commercials, instructional videos, and public service announcements.⁵² Other localities use photo and video footage to cultivate attention for tourism. For example, in the City Philadelphia and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, the city and county use friendly relations with bloggers to facilitate a network of “free” or inexpensive publicity through consumer-run blogs, podcasts, video content on Vimeo and YouTube, and Flickr photos.⁵³ In each case, however, the ultimate result of content promotion depends on the generation of offline results in the community, and these results could take time to develop after a social media campaign.

As with other social media, entering photo and video sharing sites does not guarantee an instant following, and there is no single solution for creating the sort of visually compelling material that could draw attention toward city social media channels. However, research by Mandarano, et al. (2010), and Solis and Breakenridge (2009) find

⁵⁰ Lamers interview, Mar. 3, 2011.

⁵¹ Stacey Laird-Dicke (Director, Parks and Recreation, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 18, 2011.

⁵² Todd Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (Government Technology’s Digital Communities, 2008), p. 9, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

⁵³ Ellen Perlman, “Bloggerly Love,” *Governing* (online), last modified Dec. 1, 2008, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.governing.com/columns/tech-talk/Bloggerly-Love.html>.

that content production and distribution of online visuals is relatively inexpensive, with potentially valuable consequences for outreach and communication.⁵⁴ Additionally, video content does not necessarily need to be longer than 3-5 minutes to be effective.⁵⁵ Similar to the approach adopted in Philadelphia, if the City of New Braunfels does not want to produce its own content or finds that it does not have the resources to produce photo or video content, the city instead could incorporate user-generated content into social media channels. Several studies indicate that the use of photos or videos produced unofficially by users but shared through the official social media channels could help to build a sense of community, loyalty, and/or appreciation within an online audience.⁵⁶

Blogs

According to Solis and Breakenridge (2009): “Social Media and Web 2.0 are altering the entire media landscape, placing the power of influence in the hands of regular people with expertise, opinions, and the drive and passion to share those opinions.”⁵⁷ In total, by the end of 2010, the Internet had an estimated 200 million blogs.⁵⁸ Consequently, “citizen journalism” (including blogs, podcasts, and video blogs) has

⁵⁴ Lynn Mandarano, Mahbubur Meenar, and Christopher Steins, “Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement,” *Journal of Planning Literature* 25, no. 2 (2010): 128; Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 126.

⁵⁵ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 135.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 18; Kent Wertime and Ian Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons – Asia, 2008), p. 63, 231; Patrick Kerley, “Six@Six: 6 Tips for Building Communities of Support on Facebook,” *Bulletproof Blog: The Blog on Crisis Communications*, Oct. 27, 2009, <http://www.bulletproofblog.com/2009/10/27/sixsix-6-tips-for-building-communities-of-support-on-facebook>.

⁵⁷ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Paul Gillin, “The End of ‘Social Media’,” *Paul Gillin: Social Media and the Open Enterprise* (blog), Dec. 16, 2010, <http://gillin.com/blog>.

cultivated influence that, depending on the blogger or source, may actually surpass some traditional media outlets.⁵⁹

Several studies recommend engaging communities of interest on other blogs or social media channels.⁶⁰ Just as municipal communications staff might work closely with columnists in the local paper, cities could cultivate favorable coverage by identifying potential bloggers as influencers and affording them the same treatment as traditional journalists.⁶¹ Since some blogs may represent communities that are important for municipal communications, trusted bloggers might also be considered as a quasi-wire service to complement traditional wires.⁶² Based on results derived from Google Alerts research (see Appendix E), New Braunfels does not have citizen bloggers following city government, but blogs administered through the KGNB-AM radio website and MySanAntonio.com could be useful for sharing online content about New Braunfels. In addition, Facebook communities that follow the Parks and Recreation Department, the Library, the New Braunfels Farm-to-Market, the Downtown New Braunfels Association, the two city Independent School Districts, and the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung* could have an interest in reading and sharing blog content posted by the city government.⁶³

If the City of New Braunfels elects to use a blog as part of a new media messaging effort, successfully mastering the tone and practice of blogging could take time and practice. Emphasizing the importance of humanizing the social media story, Li

⁵⁹ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 49.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 18; Kane, Fichman, Gallagher, and Glaser, "Community Relations 2.0," *Harvard Business Review*, p. 6; Wertime and Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (2008), p. 239.

⁶¹ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 54.

⁶² Ibid., p. 71, 237.

⁶³ Note: All of the Facebook pages mentioned are open to the public. The author has joined all of the Facebook communities mentioned here for the purpose of observing and verifying content.

(2009) succinctly observes: “Cities don’t blog, people do.”⁶⁴ Throughout available studies of successful blog practices in both the public and private sectors, the common guidance is for authors to be authentic, human, and conversational as a way of making blog content more attractive and accessible to the public.⁶⁵ Kingsley (2010) suggests that cities entering social media, including blogs, could experiment with their tone and solicit subsequent feedback from followers on what seems effective.⁶⁶ In addition, numerous studies of public and private organization blogging indicate that regularly scheduled posting can help to maintain interest from the community of readers.⁶⁷ With respect to blogs and other forms of social media, this study acknowledges that negativity or public criticism could be a problem for municipalities. More information on this unresolved issue is presented in Chapter 4.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

If the City of New Braunfels pursues social media as a tool for message management, complications could include negative or inappropriate uses of the city name, message competition, and social media access within certain populations.

⁶⁴ Charlene Li, “Transforming Cities Using Social Media,” (annual meeting presentation, League of California Cities, July 30, 2009), accessed Mar. 2011, <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>.

⁶⁵ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 135, 173; Wertime and Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (2008), p. 233, 344; Ethan Klapper, “Facebook Pages and Government: Best Practices,” *socialGovernment* (blog), Mar. 17, 2009, <http://www.socialgovernment.com/2009/03/17/facebook-pages-and-government-best-practices>.

⁶⁶ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 8.

⁶⁷ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 147; Wertime and Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (2008), p. 334; Patrick Kerley, “The Best of Six@Six in 2010: Six Things Every Company Should Be Doing in 2011,” *Bulletproof Blog: The Blog on Crisis Communications* (blog), Dec. 28, 2010, <http://www.bulletproofblog.com/2010/12/28/the-best-of-sixsix-in-2010-six-things-every-company-should-be-doing-in-2011>; Paul Gillin, “The Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicles blogs – badly,” *Paul Gillin: Social Media and the Open Enterprise* (blog), Aug. 15, 2007, <http://gillin.com/blog/2007/08/the-mass-registry-of-motor-vehicles-blogs-badly/>; Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 18.

Negative or Inappropriate Use of the City Identity

The city may be interested to know how its name, brand image, and departments are being portrayed in social media. This chapter and Appendix F demonstrate how the city can use free tools to survey names and keywords quickly across social media channels. However, engaging individuals using “New Braunfels” or negative derivations of the name may be problematic, especially if they have existing audiences. For example, users currently following “New_Braunfels” on Twitter are subscribing to the local Severe Weather Alert System (SWAS).⁶⁸ If city administrators decide to use Twitter as a communications tool, separating the city identity from SWAS could require developing a clear, separate profile and promotion of this profile as the authentic “voice” of the City of New Braunfels. In a similar manner, as of March 2011, individuals searching for “New Braunfels News” on Facebook would find that two of the top three groups⁶⁹ returned by the search query are “Don’t let New Braunfels Ruin the River,” which has 168 members, and “I hate New Braunfels tourism,” which has 94 members.⁷⁰ By way of comparison, around the same date, the Landa Park Golf Course Facebook page had roughly 126 fans.⁷¹ Again, if Facebook is a desired social media tool, then city administrators could find that they need to develop a page to eclipse negative associations with the city, while also engaging disappointed online constituencies to determine why they have complaints.

In addition, awareness of the brand online extends to social media pages that are inactive. For example, Facebook includes a group page with the title “New Braunfels

⁶⁸ “New_Braunfels,” SWAS Twitter feed, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://twitter.com/New_Braunfels.

⁶⁹ Note: For reference, the third is “New Braunfels Ultimate Frisbee,” with fifty members.

⁷⁰ “Search: New Braunfels News,” Facebook, accessed Mar. 10, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/search.php?q=New%20Braunfels%20News&init=quick&tas=0.7563611341174692>.

⁷¹ Laird-Dicke interview, Feb. 18, 2011.

Fire Department” that includes an official Fire Department logo and uploaded photos and videos.⁷² After discussion with the Fire Department, it is unclear whether or not the page is officially sanctioned or affiliated with actual city employees.⁷³ As of April 2011, the last posting by any member of the group was January 10, 2010.⁷⁴ While this page may serve some purpose to connect members of the community with firefighters, its use is unclear, and it could cause confusion among members of the public seeking up-to-date, reliable information on the department and, as was addressed in Chapter 2, emergency communications.

Message Competition

Through social media, municipalities have the opportunity to take their stories directly to their stakeholders without relying upon third-party media coverage, which represents a potential threat to traditional media.⁷⁵ However, the City of New Braunfels could face message competition from social media users in the general public and from other media outlets as city administrators try to share the official message through social media. The abundance of instant information, particularly through mobile content and micromedia, creates a possible mindset that Solis and Breakenridge (2009) caption as: “If the news is important, it will find me.”⁷⁶ Therefore, public awareness of official channels

⁷² Wendy Craig Wehman (creator), “New Braunfels Fire Department,” Facebook, accessed Apr. 27, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58641841947>.

⁷³ Derek Wrenn (Assistant Fire Chief, New Braunfels Fire Department, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 15, 2011.

⁷⁴ Wehman (creator), “New Braunfels Fire Department,” Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58641841947>.

⁷⁵ Gerald Baron, “Five Ways Social Media is Changing Emergency Management,” *Crisis Comm* (blog), Oct. 19, 2009, <http://www.emergencymgmt.com/emergency-blogs/crisis-comm/Five-Ways-Social-Media.html>; Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff, *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2008), p. 23; Harfoush, *Yes We Did: An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand* (2009), p. 27.

⁷⁶ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 53.

becomes a factor for consideration. Kingsley (2010) suggests that the extensive number of information sources require cities to be creative and innovative in the content they provide in order to attract an audience.⁷⁷ Similarly, several studies also note that the cross-promotion of social media with traditional media and the city website could increase social media awareness within a greater audience.⁷⁸

Due in part to Internet access across mobile devices, citizens have real-time capabilities to witness and share information on public incidents throughout their social networks.⁷⁹ As a result, government agencies cannot easily control perception through the official press conference and contacts with traditional media outlets, much less handle the loss of control that comes from competing information shared rapidly through social media.⁸⁰ Instead, studies involving government use of social media recommend that control over a message in social media outlets comes more from engagement with constituents and the development of relationships within social media before problems occur.⁸¹ In the meantime, traditional media entities also make use of social media tools that could be competitive with city messaging. For example, despite the fact that it charges for online content on its website, the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung* has own social media presence, including over 600 Facebook fans and 300 Twitter followers. The

⁷⁷ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, (2010), p. 8.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 8; Government Technology, *A How-To Guide for Creating Open Government* (2010), p. 19, http://media2.govtech.com/documents/gt_765331_How_To.pdf; Charlene Li, *Open Leadership: How Social Technology Can Transform the Way You Lead* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), p. 350; Kerley, "Six@Six: 6 Tips for Building Communities of Support on Facebook," *Bulletproof Blog: The Blog on Crisis Communications*, <http://www.bulletproofblog.com/2009/10/27/sixsix-6-tips-for-building-communities-of-support-on-facebook>.

⁷⁹ Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (2008), p. 12, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 12; Li, "Transforming Cities Using Social Media," (2009), <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>; Li, *Open Leadership: How Social Technology Can Transform the Way You Lead* (2010), p. 8; Wertine and Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (2008), p. 44.

paper also provides news updates with shortened links⁸² and highlights its Twitter feed as a widget on its homepage.⁸³

Access

Finally, using social media for message purposes requires mindfulness toward individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency. To improve accessibility, video and photo sharing websites may offer an option for the content producer to add captions.⁸⁴ Also, webcasts and podcasts can be adapted to provide closed captioning.⁸⁵ To make its own social media applications more accessible, the State of Texas recommends specific options for online or mobile viewing of content posted on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube (the latter with closed captioning).⁸⁶ In addition, microblogging tools (e.g., Twitter) can be adapted to provide an appropriate and clear message for citizens who rely upon specialized screen readers. For example, accessibletwitter.com could be used to make micromedia communications more approachable for disabled citizens.⁸⁷ Also, municipalities using microblogging could provide lists of acronyms and synonyms used when abbreviating for the sake of message brevity or adopt a policy not to abbreviate at all.⁸⁸ Finally, the Federal Web Managers Council (2008) recommends that government entities consider hiring or using bilingual

⁸² "Login," *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung* online, accessed Mar. 10, 2011, http://herald-zeitung.com/users/login/?referer_url=/app/tecnavia/auth.php; "New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung," Facebook page of the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, accessed Mar. 10, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Braunfels-Herald-Zeitung/110394895661837?v=wall>.

⁸³ *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung* online, accessed Mar. 10, 2011, <http://herald-zeitung.com>.

⁸⁴ Ellen Perlman, "Social Media Sites' Handicap Hurdle," *Governing* (online), last modified Oct. 2009, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.governing.com/columns/tech-talk/Social-Media-Sites-Handicap.html>.

⁸⁵ Federal Web Managers Council, *Putting Citizens First: Transforming Online Government, A White Paper Written for the 2008-2009 Presidential Transition Team* (2008), p. 3.

⁸⁶ "State of Texas Social Media Policy," State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>.

⁸⁷ Perlman, "Social Media Sites' Handicap Hurdle," *Governing* (online), <http://www.governing.com/columns/tech-talk/Social-Media-Sites-Handicap.html>.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

staff with skills in web content or social media to assist those with limited English capabilities.⁸⁹ As city administrators consider social media as a messaging tool, reaching audiences of disabled or limited English constituents could become a communication and/or legal issue for consideration.

SUMMARY

Social media could be used to support the City of New Braunfels in an endeavor to create direct-to-citizen messaging. Existing patterns of local press coverage provide the city with the possible motivation to innovate its message delivery, although current channels of communication (i.e., the city website and public access channel) lack dynamic content. Possible options that could facilitate the city's engagement of social media for messaging include hiring a PIO, conducting an audit of the city's brand identity online, and examining social media applications used by the city's market comparators. Social media tools that may be useful for message improvement include micromedia, photo and video sharing, and blogs. However, negative uses of the city's identity online, message competition, and public access to social media tools remain unresolved issues for this strategy.

⁸⁹ Federal Web Managers Council, *Putting Citizens First: Transforming Online Government, A White Paper Written for the 2008-2009 Presidential Transition Team* (2008), p. 3.

Chapter 4: Service Goal – Civic Engagement

Goal: Increase public participation and engagement.

CURRENT TRENDS

This study acknowledges a limitation in the amount of data available regarding civic engagement in New Braunfels. Without survey, focus group, or interview data, this study relies upon the perceptions of city administrators who use panel applications and hearing attendance as indicators of public attitudes. As a result, this study cannot state conclusively whether or not city residents have a sense of engagement with their community or government. However, based upon statistics that indicate high levels of social media use, the demographic similarities between typical Internet and social media users and the population of New Braunfels, and relevant literature on the application of social media to government work, this study proposes that social media could be used to gauge and enhance public engagement in New Braunfels. The following paragraphs explain current perceptions of civic engagement in the city and briefly discuss a connection between online interaction and offline civic activity.

Perceptions of Civic Engagement in New Braunfels

In addition to their observation of frequently low levels of attendance at City Council meetings,¹ city administrators have been concerned about the number of local board and commission seats that have failed to attract interested candidates from the community.² As a result, some positions have become dependent upon the willingness of

¹ Danny Batts (Deputy City Secretary, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Mar. 1, 2011; Note: This study does not have quantitative data to support the observation of city officials. However, as an attendee of city hearings during Summer 2010, the author can attest to the same observation.

² Deborah Korinchock (Director of Support Services, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview by Jonathan Rogers, Dec. 2, 2010.

a small number of willing individuals to continue to volunteer to serve, and in many cases, positions have remained vacant.³ New Braunfels has between twenty-five and thirty boards and commissions, meaning that it has to solicit interest, appoint members, and maintain membership for approximately two-hundred fifty positions.⁴ In many cases, individuals who apply to fill a vacancy do so unopposed, although some openings may receive two to three applicants per vacancy because the statutory power of the particular boards or commissions enhances community interest.⁵

Analysis of vacancies across eleven boards and commissions by the Office of the City Secretary revealed that, in some cases, as many as five seats on a single panel were open for more than a year between May 2009 and October 2010.⁶ For four boards and commissions, the longest vacancy for at least one seat was more than eleven months; for another four, seats remained open for a period of four to five months.⁷ As of March 2011, the city had approximately fifteen to twenty vacancies within the group of public panels.⁸ Appendix G provides the full list of vacancies for the eleven boards and commissions surveyed by the Office of the City Secretary.

Online Trends and Offline Engagement

In Chapter 1, this study makes observations about the growing trend of Internet and social media use. Beyond the data presented there, two other observations emerge from research on online activities: 1) Many adults are seeking information from government websites, and a link may exist between public opinions about government

³ Korinchock interview, Dec. 2, 2010.

⁴ Batts interview, Mar. 1, 2011.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Danny Batts, "Board and Commission Vacancy Analysis.xlsx" (Excel document prepared by Deputy City Secretary, City of New Braunfels, Texas, to accompany e-mail "CONB Vacancy Info" to Jon Rogers, Mar. 3, 2011).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Batts interview, Mar. 1, 2011.

information sharing and perceptions regarding quality of life; and 2) individuals who use the Internet on one or more platforms (e.g., wireless connection or mobile device) may be more likely to be engaged in civic activities offline.

First, Pew research (2010) indicates that American adults who use the Internet do so for a variety of reasons.⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, the most common activity among adults involves electronic mail (e-mail), with 94 percent of the adult user population indicating use.¹⁰ Of note for the City of New Braunfels, 67 percent of adults indicate that they use the Internet to visit websites of local, state, and federal governments.¹¹ Over a majority of the adult user population in each age group respond that they engage government information online.¹² Figure 4.1 (below) demonstrates government website usage trends by age group. For additional reference, Appendix H provides information regarding the frequency of online activities among adults in the United States. Additionally, Pew studies (2011) posit that constituents who believe that their local governments excel at sharing information, including online communication, are more likely to be satisfied with their civic lives, their community, and their government.¹³

⁹ “Trend Data,” Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activities-Total.aspx>.

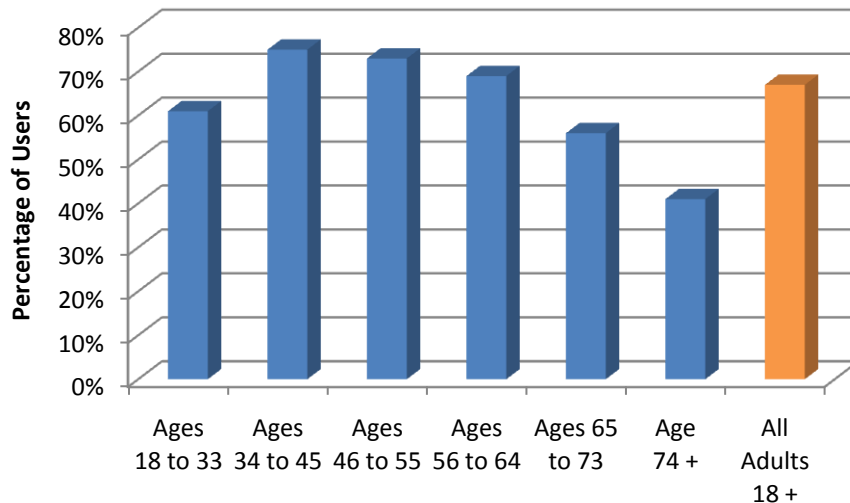
¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 9-10, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

¹³ Lee Rainie, Kristen Purcell, Tony Siesfeld, and Mayur Patel, *How the Public Perceives Community Information Systems* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Mar. 1, 2011), p. 1, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/08-Community-Information-Systems.aspx>.

Figure 4.1: Estimated Percentage of Adults in the United States Who Report Visiting Government Websites, by Age Group (2010)



Source: Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 9-10, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

Second, additional work by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2011) suggests that adults who are Internet users, adults who have wireless access to the Internet, and adults with cell phones are all more likely to engage in more than twenty different categories of offline group participation than those without the electronic means mentioned above.¹⁴ To cite two examples relevant for the city, users were more likely to participate in community groups or neighborhood associations and political parties or organizations.¹⁵ Similarly, Watkins (2009) and Harfoush (2009) find that greater levels of political engagement online translated into more offline political activity and the willingness to mobilize for a cause.¹⁶

¹⁴ “Infographic: Communities: Group participation and technology,” Lee Rainie, Kristen Purcell, and Aaron Smith, Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified Jan. 18, 2011, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/2011/Social-Side-of-the-Internet.aspx>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ S. Craig Watkins, *The Young and the Digital: What the Migration to Social-Network Sites, Games, and Anytime, Anywhere Media Means for Our Future* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2009), p. 204; Rahaf

While the link between information provision online and offline civic engagement and community satisfaction is not comprehensively supported by data and, as such, is not conclusive, it does raise the possibility that online interaction between government and constituent could improve the likelihood of increasing public engagement. In one quasi-case study relevant for the city, the New Braunfels Public Library used Facebook and Twitter accounts as communication platforms to promote its Summer 2010 teen program and to engage with interested students.¹⁷ Both social media applications were coordinated with a traditional advertisement campaign that included local theaters and school libraries. As a result, attendance grew from twenty-five students in 2009 to one-hundred-thirty in 2010.¹⁸ While the exact impact of social media was not measured, the program coordinator noted that social media channels were helpful for communication with local teens.¹⁹ In this case, online activity supported the growth of an offline program, which led to yet another online endeavor; teenagers involved with library programming subsequently started their own blog to start a dialogue with young area readers and future writers.²⁰

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

This study acknowledges that there is no single social media solution for engaging citizens online and, as an additional caution, the most popular social media tools may be

Harfoush, *Yes We Did: An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand* (Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2009), p. 88.

¹⁷ Kit Ward-Crixell (Librarian, New Braunfels Public Library, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 15, 2011.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.; nbbookclub, "Our Key People!!!" *New Braunfels Teen Book Club and Writer's Group* (blog), Nov. 30, 2010, <http://nbbookclub.wordpress.com/category/book-club/page/2/>.

replaced as technologies continue to change.²¹ Instead of focusing on specific tools to use for civic engagement, possible options for the city could include establishing cogent policies for employee-constituent interaction on social media platforms, appropriate use of social media in the workplace, and the archiving of social media content. Since issues of access to social media were addressed in earlier chapters, the topic of access will not be repeated here. Additionally, before engaging citizens through social media, the city could consider appropriate metrics used to gauge success. Coupling desired outcomes with performance metrics, the city could develop a plan of action for promoting city boards and commissions through social media that could return quantifiable data regarding public interest in city content.

In recent months, the City of Fort Worth, Texas, developed its own set of policies governing the use of social media for official business, including the procedures for establishing social media accounts, protocols for social media posting and content, content retention, and consequences.²² While Fort Worth is not a market comparator for New Braunfels, the thoroughness of the policy and the accessibility of Fort Worth public affairs staff attracted the interest of this study. For reference, and with the permission of Fort Worth officials, the city's social media policy is reproduced in this report as Appendix I.

Employee-Constituent Interaction Guidance

As noted in Chapter 3, the City of New Braunfels is in the process of hiring a full-time Public Information Officer (PIO). In addition to the responsibilities listed in the

²¹ Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 24-25.

²² Jason Lamers (Media and Public Affairs Manager, City of Fort Worth, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Mar. 3, 2011.

earlier chapter, the PIO will be responsible for “[updating] and [maintaining] the City’s Media Policy, [developing] necessary policies and procedures and [coordinating] media relations training for City staff.”²³ For municipalities, the PIO could play an important role in developing compliance and consistent standards across social media accounts, shaping employee policies, and working alongside social media providers to improve information security.²⁴ In addition, this individual could serve as the city moderator or gatekeeper in online communities to protect sensitive information and regulate appropriate public dialogue.²⁵

As a constituent-service organization, the City of New Braunfels likely will need a clear set of guidelines to govern interaction between city representatives and citizens online. By way of example, the two city departments active in social media (the Library and Parks and Recreation) did not establish formal policies before implementing social media.²⁶ Neither of the departments has adopted formal policies governing customer interaction, although both directors exercise control over content posted and, when necessary, citizen responses.²⁷ While language regarding employee guidance varies across organizations, typical points of consideration include: how quickly to respond to citizens and, possibly, how long to retain posted material;²⁸ how to respond to individuals

²³ City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Public Information Officer,” city document: job description, revised date December 2010.

²⁴ Cindy Waxer, “CIOs Struggle With Social Media’s Security Risks,” *Government Technology Online: Public CIO*, last modified Feb. 11, 2011, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/pcio/CIOs-Social-Media-Security-Risks-021111.html>.

²⁵ Carolyn Duffy Marsan, “ADVICE + DISSENT: Managing Technology Unlocking Ideas,” *Government Executive* (online), last modified Apr. 1, 2009, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/features/0409-01/0409-01/admt.htm.

²⁶ Ward-Crixell interview, Feb. 15, 2011; Stacey Laird-Dicke (Director, Parks and Recreation, City of New Braunfels, Texas), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 18, 2011.

²⁷ E-mail from Gretchen Pruett, Director, New Braunfels Public Library, City of New Braunfels, Texas, “NBPL Facebook Page,” to Jon Rogers, Feb. 12, 2011; Laird-Dicke, interview, Feb. 18, 2011.

²⁸ City of Fort Worth, Texas, “Social Media and Electronic Communication Frequently Asked Questions,” city document, provided by Jason Lamers by e-mail “Re: FW: Informational Interview Request: Fort Worth and Social Media” to Jon Rogers, Mar. 2, 2011.

who are displeased, inappropriate, angry, or who have inaccurate facts;²⁹ what to do or whom to contact during situations in which the city has provided inaccurate facts or when online attacks have escalated;³⁰ and when it is appropriate to delete language that is profane, offensive, or inciting illegal or violent acts.³¹

Since employees within municipalities have different levels of skill with social media, a city could need several hours of training opportunities and/or simulated exercises to make employees comfortable interacting over social media channels.³² Among their recommendations for federal staffers engaging in social media, the Federal CIO Council suggests that employees could be trained to understand: “what information to share, with whom they can share it, and what not to share;” the dangers of mixing their personal and professional lives; threats and problems specific to social media; and the extent to which they are allowed to personally identify themselves and their job functions on social media, whether through official or personal accounts.³³

²⁹ Charlene Li, *Open Leadership: How Social Technology Can Transform the Way You Lead* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), p. 138.

³⁰ Jana Hrdinova, Natalie Helbig, and Catherine Stollar Peters, *Designing Social Media for Government: Eight Essential Elements* (Albany, NY: Center for Technology in Government, University at Albany, SUNY, May 2010), p. 8, accessed Feb. 24, 2010, http://ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/social_media_policy/social_media_policy.pdf, Li, *Open Leadership: How Social Technology Can Transform the Way You Lead* (2010), p. 138; Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011.

³¹ “State of Texas Social Media Policy,” State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>; Hrdinova, Helbig, and Peters, *Designing Social Media for Government: Eight Essential Elements* (2010), p. 12, http://ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/social_media_policy/social_media_policy.pdf; City of Fort Worth, Texas, “Social Media and Electronic Communication Frequently Asked Questions,” city document, provided by Jason Lamers by e-mail, Mar. 2, 2011.

³² Webber interview, Feb. 11, 2011.

³³ Federal CIO Council, *Guidelines for Secure Use of Social Media by Federal Departments and Agencies, Version 1.0* (Washington, DC: Federal CIO Council, Information Security and Identity Management Committee, Network and Infrastructure Security Subcommittee, Web 2.0 Security Working Group, 2009), p. 14, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://www.cio.gov/Documents/Guidelines_for_Secure_Use_Social_Media_v01-0.pdf.

Appropriate Use of Social Media

Surveying employee access policies across federal, state, and local entities, Hrdinova, et al. (2010), suggest that management of employee access to social media websites at work tends toward one of two options: either agencies limit the “number or types of employees” who may use social media, or agencies restrict the number of approved sites that may be accessed during the workday.³⁴ Responding to concerns by some government agencies that social media only serves as a means to waste working time, Sander (2008) notes: “[Technology] doesn’t waste time; people waste time.... [This] issue can be overcome with appropriate policies, employee education and effective personnel management.”³⁵ Studies of social media use by government entities recommend that employees be provided with a clear acceptable use policy (AUP) that, at a minimum, sets forth expectations for the use of social media resources, personal use guidelines, and consequences for violations.³⁶

As of May 2011, city administrators in New Braunfels are reviewing a social media policy that would allow employees to use city-sponsored social media accounts to perform their daily duties.³⁷ Meanwhile, employees would be prohibited from posting on personal social media accounts during business hours and prevented from sharing

³⁴ Hrdinova, Helbig, and Peters, *Designing Social Media for Government: Eight Essential Elements* (2010), p. 2-12, http://ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/social_media_policy/social_media_policy.pdf.

³⁵ Todd Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (Government Technology’s Digital Communities, 2008), p. 8, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

³⁶ Hrdinova, Helbig, and Peters, *Designing Social Media for Government: Eight Essential Elements* (2010), p. 2-12, http://ctg.albany.edu/publications/guides/social_media_policy/social_media_policy.pdf; Federal CIO Council, *Guidelines for Secure Use of Social Media by Federal Departments and Agencies, Version 1.0* (2009), p. 14, http://www.cio.gov/Documents/Guidelines_for_Secure_Use_Social_Media_v01-0.pdf.

³⁷ E-mail from Julie O’Connell, Human Resources Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Online / Digital/Social Media policy,” to Jon Rogers and Deborah Korinchock, Feb.11, 2011.

“inappropriate” comments about the city on personal accounts.³⁸ With respect to the consequences for not abiding by the social media policy, the document would stipulate that “violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.”³⁹ At this time, the policy remains under consideration and has not been implemented.⁴⁰

Archiving

Because state laws and local code differ with respect to requirements for records retention and archiving, municipal policies on social media content retention also differ. Nonetheless, requirements of public laws on the maintenance of public records and archiving do apply to some degree when agencies enter social media;⁴¹ thus, for public consideration, some government agencies will post a notice of their recordkeeping policy alongside official identification and legal notices on their social media profile pages.⁴² According to the State of Texas social media policy, “Social media sites may contain communications sent to or received by state employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to State Records Retention requirements.”⁴³ Further, state policy clarifies that this includes any form of posted record, including “digital text,

³⁸ E-mail from Julie O’Connell, Human Resources Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Online / Digital/Social Media policy,” to Jon Rogers and Deborah Korinchock, Feb.11, 2011.

³⁹ E-mail from Julie O’Connell, Human Resources Director, City of New Braunfels, Texas, “Online / Digital/Social Media policy,” to Jon Rogers, Mar. 22, 2011.

⁴⁰ E-mail from Julie O’Connell, “Online / Digital/Social Media policy,” Feb.11, 2011.

⁴¹ Michelle Bono and Nannette Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference, accessed via webcast, New Braunfels, Texas, Dec. 2, 2010); Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (2008), p. 6, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

⁴² Tina Trenkner, “Public Records in a Box,” *View* (blog), Jan. 5, 2010, <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/Public-Records-in-a.html>.

⁴³ “State of Texas Social Media Policy,” State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>.

photos, audio, or video.”⁴⁴ With respect to its own content on third-party social media websites, Texas.gov specifies that the government “will put forth reasonable efforts to archive copies of social media content” from these sites.⁴⁵ What remains unclear is the exact type of filing necessary to meet content requirements; therefore, tools also vary by municipality. For reference, Table 4.1 (below) provides a non-comprehensive list of tools cited as useful for social media content back-up purposes.

Table 4.1: Potential Tools for Social Media Content Retention

Tool	Purpose
ArchiveFacebook	Plug-in for Mozilla Firefox browser to back up Facebook content
Backupify	Online tool used to regularly save comments and information
SocialSafe	Facebook archive tool
Tweetake	Tool for archiving Twitter feeds with capability for downloading to Excel
Twinbox	Microsoft Outlook plug-in that archives Twitter feeds

Sources: Michelle Bono and Nannette Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference, accessed via webcast, New Braunfels, Texas, Dec. 2, 2010); Andy Opsahl, “Backing Up Social Media,” *Governing* (online), last modified Jan. 19, 2010, accessed Mar. 4, 2011, <http://www.governing.com/topics/technology/Backing-Up-Social-Media.html>.

Metrics

Engagement with an online citizen community could be a long-term endeavor and could involve some immeasurable, qualitative gains.⁴⁶ Moreover, different concepts of engagement emerge within social media literature, making it a potentially tricky objective to measure.⁴⁷ In some cases, even a few meaningful conversations hosted within a social

⁴⁴ “State of Texas Social Media Policy,” State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Donna L. Hoffman and Marek Fodor, “Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?” *MIT Sloan Management Review* 52, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 42-43.

⁴⁷ Brian Solis and Deirdre Breckenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/FT Press, 2009), p. 254.

media channel could prove more valuable than a high overall volume of fans, followers, or visitors to a social media website.⁴⁸

In order to measure some degree of impact of their social media outreach on public engagement, New Braunfels could implement counting metrics associated with their social media channels.⁴⁹ Writing in the *MIT Sloan Management Review*, Hoffman and Fodor (2010) developed a comprehensive chart to suggest possible, “easily measured” metrics for the measurement of return on investment across nine categories of social media channels.⁵⁰ Their system relates each social media channel to specific measurement guides within three objectives: increasing brand awareness, brand engagement (consumer involvement with the brand), and word of mouth (consumer willingness to share the brand with others).⁵¹ Table 4.2 (below) is a reproduced, but abridged version of the table presented by Hoffman and Fodor, with the categories of “cocreation” and “product reviews” omitted as irrelevant to this particular study. In addition, Appendix J provides a list of existing, specific tools that could be used for social media measurement and monitoring.

⁴⁸ Bono and Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference, 2010); Keri Pearlson and Deirdre Walsh, “National Instruments LabVIEW Community: Social Business for a B-to-B,” business case developed by National Instruments and KP Partners (2010), p. 21.

⁴⁹ Bono and Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference, 2010); Hoffman and Fodor, “Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (2010): 44; Charlene Li, “Transforming Cities Using Social Media,” (annual meeting presentation, League of California Cities, July 30, 2009), accessed Mar. 2011, <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>; Kent Wertime and Ian Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons – Asia, 2008), p. 328; Sarah Evans, “Social Media for Business: The Dos and Don’ts of Sharing,” Mashable, last modified Feb. 27, 2009, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://mashable.com/2009/02/27/social-media-for-business-2/>.

⁵⁰ Hoffman and Fodor, “Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (2010): 44.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Table 4.2: “Relevant Metrics for Social Media Applications Organized by Key Social Media Objectives.” Reproduced from Hoffman and Fodor, 2010.

Social Media Application	Brand Awareness	Brand Engagement	Word of Mouth
Blogs	Number of unique visits, return visits, or times bookmarked	Number of members, RSS feed subscribers, comments, or responses to polls, contests, or surveys; Amount of user-generated content; Average length of time on site	Number of references to blog in other on/offline media, reblogs, times badge is displayed on other sites, or “likes”
Microblogging	Number of tweets or followers; Valence of tweets (positive or negative)	Number of followers or @replies	Number of retweets
Social Bookmarking	Number of tags	Number of followers	Number of additional taggers
Forums & Discussion Boards	Number of page views or visits; Valence of posted content (positive or negative)	Number of relevant topics or threads, individual replies, or sign-ups	Incoming links; Citations in other sites; Tagging in social bookmarking; Offline references to the forum or its members; Number of “likes”
Social Networks	Number of members or fans, installs of applications, impressions, bookmarks, or reviews and ratings; Valence of reviews and ratings (positive or negative)	Number of comments, active users, “likes” on friends’ feeds, user-generated items; Usage metrics of applications/widgets; Impressions-to-interactions ratio; Rate of activity	Frequency of appearances on timelines of friends; Number of wall posts, reposts or shares, or responses to friend referral invites
Video and Photo Sharing	Number of views; Valence of ratings (positive or negative)	Number of replies, page views, comments, or subscribers	Number of embeddings, incoming links, references in derived works, republishes, or “likes”

Source: Donna L. Hoffman and Marek Fodor, “Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?” *MIT Sloan Management Review* 52, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 44.

For city boards and commissions, as with any posted content, developing social media materials does not guarantee public interest. However, starting small in social media could help to get followers involved in quick and easy ways.⁵² Using the Historic Landmark Commission as a random and hypothetical example, city administrators could take photos of city landmarks and video tours of the locations and upload them to photo and video sharing sites. Using Table 4.2 as a guide for this example, the subsequent number of photo/video views could indicate the extent to which citizens are aware of city landmarks. User comments could provide a gauge of their interest in the landmarks, and constituents' sharing of the photos/videos across their social networks could indicate their commitment to making others aware of the city's historical infrastructure. Blog or microblog conversations about historic landmarks could be monitored for the number of visitors, comments, and republishes. Meanwhile, social network pages established in connection with specific landmarks or with the commission itself could demonstrate results (positive or negative) in the number of fans, comments, and shared content. Building upon any traffic generated about landmarks or the commission within social media, a notice of vacancies for the Historic Landmark Commission could be shared throughout any one or all of the social media channels, with links to an application on the city website and additional information about the work of the commission.

Clearly, public interest in a particular topic and the quality of social media content could have an impact on whether or not a commission receives interest. However, choosing to publish and cross-promote materials through social media channels could generate engagement among constituencies who may otherwise be unaware of the community need for citizen service on boards and commissions. However, while metrics

⁵² Harfoush, *Yes We Did: An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand* (2009), p. 42.

are obtainable and quantifiable from social media tools, the real results of civic engagement on boards and commissions will not be apparent until the offline results – in this case, an increase in the applicant pool – emerge.⁵³

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

While the issues of employee-constituent conduct, appropriate social media use, and content archiving could be addressed through the development of procedures and training, using social media to engage the public nonetheless holds unresolved issues associated with public negativity, information security, and privacy concerns.

Negativity

Due to the ease of creating and sharing information on the Internet, it is virtually impossible that a city could maintain total control over its online reputation. However, any organization could be prepared to engage, in real time, in appropriate dialogues that foster goodwill among constituents.⁵⁴ Solis and Breakenridge (2009) note that, online, “negativity will not go away simply because you opt out of participating. Negative commentary, at the very least, is truly an opportunity to change a perception (which you might not have known or not known existed).”⁵⁵ As in the world offline, unsatisfied online customers are more likely to share their feelings about bad experiences, but social media tools make it possible for them to reach, essentially, millions of people with their virtual voice.⁵⁶

⁵³ Alan Shark, “Behind the curve,” *American City and County*, July 2010, p. 51.

⁵⁴ Wertine and Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (2008), p. 44.

⁵⁵ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 153.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

According to Waxer (2011), a significant threat to a municipality in social media could be the decision to stay out of social media entirely.⁵⁷ Waxer suggests that, if city officials do not use social media, they lose any “opportunity to set the record straight or better inform the general public” within the social media forum.⁵⁸ In an example relevant to New Braunfels, YouTube user “KeepNBNB” (real name not provided) established a video-sharing profile to post videos of the City Council that illustrated the user’s disappointment with government.⁵⁹ Searching for “New Braunfels” on YouTube leads to “KeepNBNB”’s contributions. Without an official presence on this website capable of responding and engaging, the city reputation could suffer because of the negative content provided by an anonymous user. Kingsley (2010) suggests that websites “with a strong association between online and off-line identities...remain civil,” unlike websites in which users are allowed to remain anonymous.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, based on their experience as city communications officials, Bono and Rodriguez (2010) believe that, since the conversation will take place with or without the municipality, the city might as well have a representative in the dialogue.⁶¹

Security

According to Sander (2008) and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (2010), a number of government agencies express concerns about the collection of data and information security when their constituents need to access

⁵⁷ Waxer, “CIOs Struggle With Social Media’s Security Risks,” *Government Technology* Online: Public CIO, <http://www.govtech.com/pcio/CIOs-Social-Media-Security-Risks-021111.html>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “KeepNBNB’s Channel,” YouTube, accessed Mar. 5, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/user/KeepNBNB>.

⁶⁰ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 11; Note: Anecdotal, interviews with officials in New Braunfels and Fort Worth who have social media experience support the idea that engaged user communities are likely to defend the online institution against negative attacks deemed unreasonable by other users.

⁶¹ Bono and Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference 2010).

information online; thus, security becomes a barrier for using social media applications.⁶² Within the literature regarding social media practices, guidance on security recommendations can be found more readily about efforts at the federal level. For example, the federal Web 2.0 Security Working Group (the Working Group) authored a report that provided recommendations on security measures for federal agencies that opt to use social media. The Working Group (2009) recommends that agencies use policies that allow quick and frequent adaptation to the changing nature of social media tools.⁶³ Instead of focusing on security concerns inherent to one application or another, the Working Group advises that information security protocols “should focus on user behavior, both personal and professional ... to address information confidentiality, integrity, and availability when accessing data or distributing government information.”⁶⁴

In regard to information technology (IT) infrastructure, the Working Group suggests that an agency’s IT department or service could be actively involved with monitoring for attacks to infrastructure via social media. Their report notes: “[A] hijacked account of a [government] user or a [government] account may have ... serious implications. Unofficial posts, tweets or messages may be seen by the public as official messages, or may be used to spread malware by encouraging users to click links or download unwanted applications.”⁶⁵ In an era of rapidly changing technologies,

⁶² Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (2008), p. 2, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf; National Association of State Chief Information Officers, *Friends, Followers, and Feeds: A National Survey of Social Media Use in State Government* (Lexington, KY: NASCIO, Sep. 2010), p. 4, accessed Feb. 2011, <http://www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO-SocialMedia.pdf>.

⁶³ Federal CIO Council, *Guidelines for Secure Use of Social Media by Federal Departments and Agencies, Version 1.0* (2009), p. 6, http://www.cio.gov/Documents/Guidelines_for_Secure_Use_Social_Media_v01-0.pdf.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

information security could present a significant challenge for municipal governments with limited resources for IT monitoring.

Privacy

Online privacy remains a potential area for contention. Citron (2010) suggests that government entities should protect themselves against the temptation for surveillance on social media websites.⁶⁶ She argues that government agencies could protect the privacy of their online constituents by considering social media as “one-way mirrors,” in which citizens are able to interact with the government and read posted materials, while the government abstains from collecting, using, or sharing user profile or posted information.⁶⁷ In his case study of Columbus, Ohio, Landsbergen (2010) raises similar concerns about protecting the identities of citizens who want to contact the government through social media channels.⁶⁸ To diminish any concerns, he recommends posting the city policy on “how information will be collected, used and retained” on the social media page and any pages that might be used as points of entry to social media.⁶⁹ For example, the State of Texas privacy policy for social media explains that state employees are only allowed to post public information on social media websites and that personnel are not permitted to post materials that could lead to personal identification.⁷⁰ However, the state limits its liability by stating that it is responsible neither “for content posted by others to

⁶⁶ Danielle Keats Citron, “Fulfilling Government 2.0’s Promise with Robust Privacy Protections,” *George Washington Law Review* 78, no. 4 (Jun. 2010): 822.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 822.

⁶⁸ David Landsbergen, “Government as Part of the Revolution: Using Social Media to Achieve Public Goals,” *Electronic Journal of e-Government* 8, no. 2 (2010): 140.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁷⁰ “State of Texas Social Media Policy,” State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>.

Texas.gov social media sites” nor for personal information entered by citizens for public display.⁷¹

On a related note, Landsbergen (2010) also cites the interest of many cities in ensuring that individuals who can be identified as city employees behave in an appropriate, professional manner on their personal social media profiles.⁷² For example, the City of Tallahassee, Florida, Social Media and Collaboration Policy specifies that employees who identify themselves as associated with the city or employees with “public facing” positions maintain personal social media profiles that are “consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a City of Tallahassee professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with your positions, and conforming to existing standards....”⁷³ Tallahassee’s policy states: “Have no expectation of privacy once you have introduced yourself publicly.”⁷⁴ At this time, it is unclear what the long-term implications of this policy might be if a city was contested in court, although Landsbergen (2010) acknowledges that this presents “significant privacy questions” to be addressed in the future.⁷⁵

SUMMARY

Social media could be used to foster civic engagement in New Braunfels, although the foundations of the city social media policy, including guidelines on constituent interaction, appropriate use, archiving, and the development of performance

⁷¹ “State of Texas Social Media Policy,” State of Texas, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, <http://www.texas.gov/en/about/Pages/social-media-policy.aspx>.

⁷² Landsbergen, “Government as Part of the Revolution: Using Social Media to Achieve Public Goals,” *Electronic Journal of e-Government* (2010): 140.

⁷³ City of Tallahassee, Florida, Department of Communications, *Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual: Social Media and Collaboration Policy*, no.408, effective Sep. 20, 2010, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷⁵ Landsbergen, “Government as Part of the Revolution: Using Social Media to Achieve Public Goals,” *Electronic Journal of e-Government* (2010): 140.

metrics could prove more useful than focusing on the merits of one or more specific social media tools. Since public engagement is a difficult concept to quantify through social media, performance metrics offer a way of tracking interest in social media content over the short and long term. This study is limited in its ability to gauge current levels of public engagement, apart from observations offered by city administrators. Additionally, the possibility of public criticism, information security, and information and identity privacy remain unresolved issues as cities develop social media strategies.

Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts

In Chapters One through Four, this report indicates that the City of New Braunfels could use social media tools to support its three service goals. A brief survey of literature on government and organizational use of information and communication technology and social media indicate both positive and negative considerations for proceeding with a social media strategy.

Hague and Loader (1999) suggest that information and communications technologies (ICTs) augment democracy by improving “many-to-many” interaction among constituents; offering opportunities for free speech; creating opportunities for free association among online communities; and providing forums in which citizens can challenge official points-of-view.¹ They propose that a “strong democracy” comes from a government that provides “relevant information, in a user-friendly format... [without] barriers to access” and with the commitment to open deliberation and dialogue through technology platforms.² Weatherford (2009) and Newell (2009) argue that social media technologies are the means by which such a democracy can be reached, particularly as more citizens seek information from channels in which they are already active.³

As younger generations of Americans (in particular, those in the 12-17 or 18-29 year-old age groups) get older, social media could play a key role in their expectations of government. In particular, Azua (2010) and Vollmer and Precourt (2008) suggest that

¹ Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader, “Digital democracy: an introduction,” in *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*, eds. Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), p. 6.

² Ibid., p. 11, 15, 21.

³ Mark Weatherford, “How Safe is Social Media? (Opinion),” *Government Technology* Online: Public CIO, last modified Sept. 29, 2009, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, <http://www.govtech.com/pcio/How-Safe-Is-Social-Media-Opinion.html>; Elizabeth Newell, “Agencies test new waters in social media,” *Government Executive* (online), last modified Feb. 19, 2009, accessed Mar. 3, 2011, http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?filepath=/dailyfed/0209/021909mag.htm..

individuals of these age groups are the drivers for moving content into more active, social infrastructures.⁴ Ryan and Jones (2009) add that the “ubiquitous” nature of digital technologies and their facilitation of quick and convenient contact help to eliminate constraints like time and physical location from individuals’ consideration of conducting transactions.⁵ For Holmes (2001), this realization provides an opportunity for agencies to change public perceptions about government, from rigidity and unchanging to modern and flexible.⁶

As such, *Government Technology* (2010) recommends that government entities develop “information services and applications that work well” on a variety of digital devices and platforms, including mobile.⁷ Subsequently, the study suggests that governments should be putting out data in all possible formats, including “text, photos, audio, video and geospatial presentations.”⁸ In addition, Bono and Rodriguez (2010), Kingsley (2010), and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (2010) observe that entering most popular social media channels comes with no start-up financial cost, which makes the investment appealing for cities seeking to improve public communication and engagement in spite of budgetary constraints.⁹

⁴ Maria Azua, *The Social Factor: Innovate, Ignite, and Win through Mass Collaboration and Social Networking* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: IBM Press/Pearson Plc, 2010), Introduction; Christopher Vollmer with Geoffrey Precourt, *Always On: Advertising, Marketing, and Media in an Era of Consumer Control* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2008), p. 63.

⁵ Damian Ryan and Calvin Jones, *Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation* (London, UK: Kogan Page, 2009), p. 17.

⁶ Douglas Holmes, *eGov: eBusiness Strategies for Government* (London, UK: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2001), p. 17.

⁷ Government Technology, *A How-To Guide for Creating Open Government* (2010), p. 10, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media2.govtech.com/documents/gt_765331_How_To.pdf.

⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹ Michelle Bono and Nannette Rodriguez, “Social Media Marketing Strategies That Local Governments Can Do Now,” (ICMA University webconference, accessed via webcast, New Braunfels, Texas, Dec. 2, 2010); Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 5-6; National Association of State Chief Information Officers, *Friends, Followers, and Feeds: A National Survey of Social Media Use in State Government* (Lexington,

However, as indicated previously, technology is not a magic solution for problems of governance. Malina (1999) is more cautious with respect to technology leading democracy; she explains: “[Where] the seeds of strong democracy exist, [information and communications technologies] can extend and broaden positive aspects of democratic practice.”¹⁰ Dawes (2009) also warns against the distraction of technology. She notes: “ICT-driven research as well as ICT-driven governmental change often lead governments to divert their attention to technologies per se rather than the ways in which these tools can assist them to carry out their main public purpose.”¹¹

Social media could be a useful tool for municipal governments, but it also comes with its own limitations and uncertainties. As with any government strategy, social media requires strategic planning and alignment with organizational objectives to generate utility for public communication and engagement. The observations presented within this report offer a basis for guidance on the implementation of a social media strategy, but no study of this topic can be truly comprehensive in the face of ongoing technological evolution. As such, any plan of action implemented by New Braunfels will likely need time, patience, and flexibility to determine its true utility.

KY: NASCIO, Sep. 2010), accessed Feb. 2011, <http://www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO-SocialMedia.pdf>.

¹⁰ Anna Malina, “Perspectives on citizen democratisation and alienation in the virtual public sphere,” in *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*, eds. Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), 38.

¹¹ Sharon Dawes, “Governance in the digital age: A research and action framework for an uncertain future,” *Government Information Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Apr. 2009): 260.

Appendix A: Definitions

Blog: A website or online journal updated with single or multi-author content that includes dated entries and dated reader comments. The blog may facilitate links from other sources back to blog content.¹

Crowdsourcing: “The act of working with a focus group or larger groups of constituents to obtain feedback via online.”²

Hashtags [or tagging]: Provides readers of content (e.g., on blogs or microblogs) to add metadata to the online discussion; this may improve the ability to find content through searches or create more robust information threads.³

Livecasting: “[The] ability to live-broadcast video for people to watch in real time, combined with an integrated chat forum.”⁴

Mashups: “Term derived from the music industry technique of combining music from two different sources to create a new sound;”⁵ using content from multiple sources to create new content or applications.

Micromedia [or microblogging]: “Any form of concentrated content created using social tools that broadcast voice, video, images, or text to friends and followers within dedicated Web and mobile communities.”⁶

Millenials: Individuals born between 1977-1992, or (as of 2010) ages 18 to 33. This age group constitutes roughly 30 percent of the total adult population and 35 percent of the total Internet-using population in the United States, the highest of any age group identified by the Pew Research Center, Internet and American Life Project.⁷

¹ “What’s a blog?” *Blogger*, accessed Apr. 18, 2011, http://www.blogger.com/tour_start.g; Wendy Macias, Karen Hilyard, and Vicki Freimuth, “Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15 (2009): 1.

² Lynn Mandarano, Mahbubur Meenar, and Christopher Steins, “Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement,” *Journal of Planning Literature* 25, no. 2 (2010): 128.

³ Brian Solis and Deirdre Breckenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/FT Press, 2009), p. 219;

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵ Lynn Mandarano, Mahbubur Meenar, and Christopher Steins, “Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement,” *Journal of Planning Literature* 25, no. 2 (2010): 128.

⁶ Solis and Breckenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 177.

⁷ Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 4, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf.

Podcast: “A podcast is an episodic program delivered via the Internet using an XML protocol called RSS. Podcast episodes can be audio files, video files, documents, or any combination of the three. The publisher or broadcaster podcasts the program by posting the episodes and the XML document to a Web server. The consumer subscribes to the podcast using a client application...which regularly reads the XML file and downloads new episodes.”⁸

Real [or Really] Simple Syndication (RSS): A “set of web-feed formats that allow frequently updated materials – such as blogs, or news, or even podcasts – to be distributed over the web;”⁹ “[a] Web feed that enables users to collect articles from many different Web sites and display them in a central location.”¹⁰

Trackbacks: Tracking and linking comments on posts (i.e., within blogs) to socialize the content through conversation.¹¹

Web 2.0: The definition of Web 2.0 has met with contention.¹² Conceptually for this report, Web 2.0 refers to “a new generation of Web applications that foster user collaboration, creativity and connectivity,” including social media.¹³ By extension, Government 2.0 “describes efforts undertaken by communities, states and the federal government to implement the tools and technologies developed and adopted by the private, commercial sector of the economy that extend the utility of the Internet.”¹⁴

⁸ “FAQs: For Podcast Fans,” *Apple iTunes*, accessed Apr. 18, 2011, <http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/fanfaq.html>.

⁹ Kent Wertine and Ian Fenwick, *DigiMarketing: The Essential Guide to New Media & Digital Marketing* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons – Asia, 2008), p. 21.

¹⁰ Mandarano, Meenar, and Steins, “Building Social Capital in the Digital Age of Civic Engagement,” *Journal of Planning Literature* (2010): 129.

¹¹ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 117.

¹² Todd Sander, *Government 2.0: Building Communities with Web 2.0 and Social Networking* (Government Technology’s Digital Communities, 2008), p. 2, accessed Feb. 17, 2011, http://media.digitalcommunities.com/documents/gt_425423_DC08_PAPER_CIO_TASK_10.27.pdf.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Appendix B: Social Media Website Statistics

Statistics for the websites below were collected from industry information on popular social media websites and, when available, data from the websites themselves. This list is intended as a snapshot of social media usage and, as such, is not comprehensive.

Table B.1: Usage Statistics for Social Media Websites (2008-11)

Social Media Site	Relevant Statistics
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500 million active users• Half of active user population returns daily• More than 250,000 registrations per day• 6 million active user groups• 14 million photos added per day
MySpace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 110 million active users per month• 300,000 registrations per day• 10 billion friend relationships• 60,000 video uploads per day
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 175 million total users• Approximately 30,000 registrations per day• 50-95 million tweets per day
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than 2 billion views per day• More than 24 hours of video uploaded per minute

Sources: “Press Room,” Facebook, accessed Mar. 25, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>; Jeremiah Owyang, “A Collection of Social Network Stats for 2010,” *Web-Strategist* (blog), Jan. 19, 2010, <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2010/01/19/a-collection-of-social-network-stats-for-2010/>; Jeremiah Owyang, “Social Network Stats: Facebook, MySpace, Reunion (Jan, 2008),” *Web-Strategist* (blog), Jan. 9, 2008, <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/01/09/social-network-stats-facebook-myspace-reunion-jan-2008/>; “Twitter is the best way to discover what’s new in your world,” Twitter, accessed Mar. 6, 2011, <http://twitter.com/about>; “Timeline,” YouTube, accessed Apr. 21, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/t/press_timeline.

Appendix C: Screenshots of City Websites

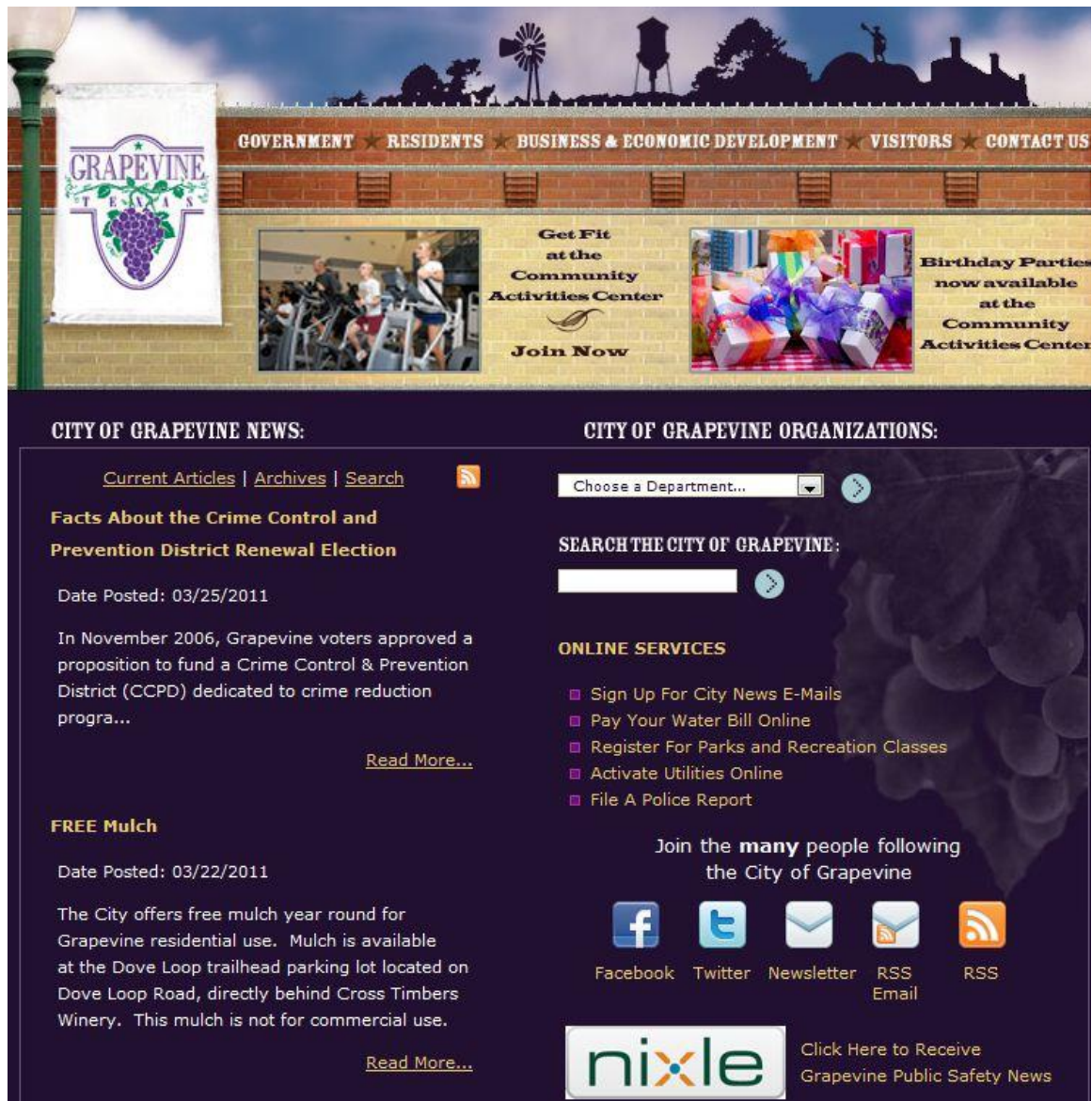
The following are screenshot examples of cities comparable to New Braunfels that integrate emergency communications applications on their websites.

Illustration C.1: Town of Flower Mound, Texas



Source: "The Town of Flower Mound, Texas," Town of Flower Mound, Texas, website, accessed Apr. 25, 2011, <http://www.flower-mound.com/index.php>.

Illustration C.2: City of Grapevine, Texas



Source: "Grapevine, Texas," City of Grapevine, Texas, website, accessed Apr. 25, 2011, <http://www.grapevinetexas.gov/>.

Appendix D: Reasons Why Adults Do Not Use the Internet

Table D.1: Approximate Adult Internet Use in the United States and Reasons for Not Using the Internet (As of May 2010)

Percentage of adults who use the Internet	79
Percentage of adults who do not use the Internet	21
Top ten cited “main reasons for not using the Internet:”	
I am not interested	31
I do not have a computer	12
Internet use is too expensive	10
Internet use is too difficult	9
Internet use is a waste of time	7
I do not have Internet access	6
I do not have time to learn how to use the Internet	6
I am too old to learn how to use the Internet	4
I do not want or need to use the Internet	4
I just do not know how to use the Internet	2
I am physically unable to use the Internet	2

Sources: Kathryn Zickuhr, *Generations 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, Dec. 16, 2010), p. 6, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Generations_and_Tech10_final.pdf; “Trend Data,” Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activites-Total.aspx>.

Appendix E: Google Alerts and the City of New Braunfels

Illustration E.1: Screenshot of Google Alerts



Google alerts
beta

Search terms: [Preview results](#)

Type:

How often:

Volume:

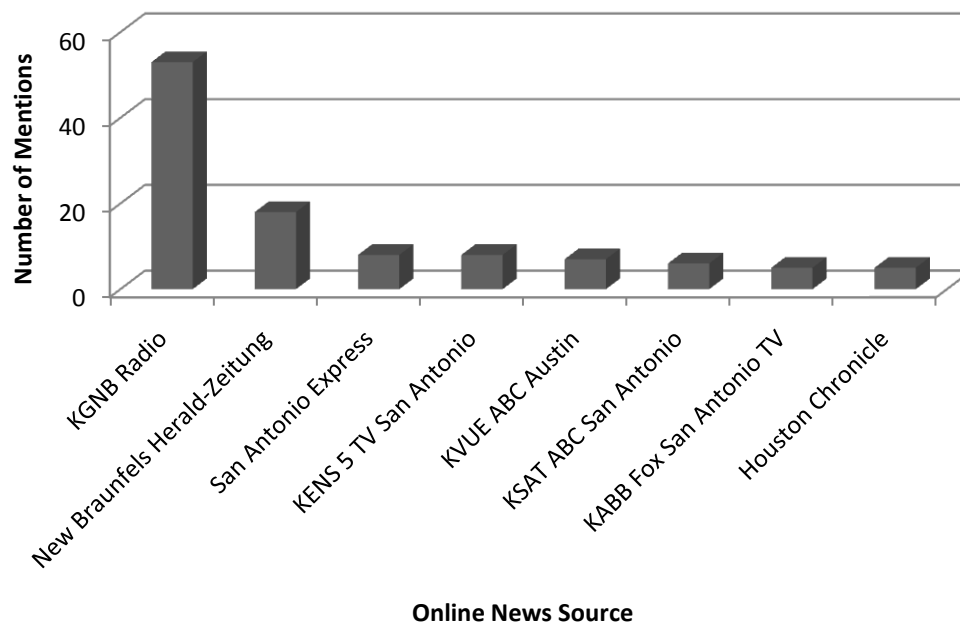
Source: “Google alerts beta,” Google, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Using Google Alerts, anyone with an RSS feed reader or an e-mail address can establish a news update system that Google consolidates and delivers to the user. Using only the search term “New Braunfels” (in quotation marks), with type “Everything” (including news, blogs, video, real-time, and discussions), volume “All results,” and once-per-day delivery, this study was able to collect information on the number of online media mentions for the City of New Braunfels between February 8 and April 8, 2011 (dates arbitrarily used). The parameters were selected to allow as much information as possible into the daily alert, and the headlines and story briefs from each alert were scanned for mentions of any city department, city entity (e.g., the New Braunfels Development Corporation), or major city event (e.g., city-wide elections and the re-opening of the Landa Park Wading Pool).

The following charts and tables show the online news entities covering the city government that posted five or more mentions, the total listing of online news sources covering the city, and the number of mentions per department, city organization, or event during the two months of Google Alerts. Of note, the number of mentions of the Police

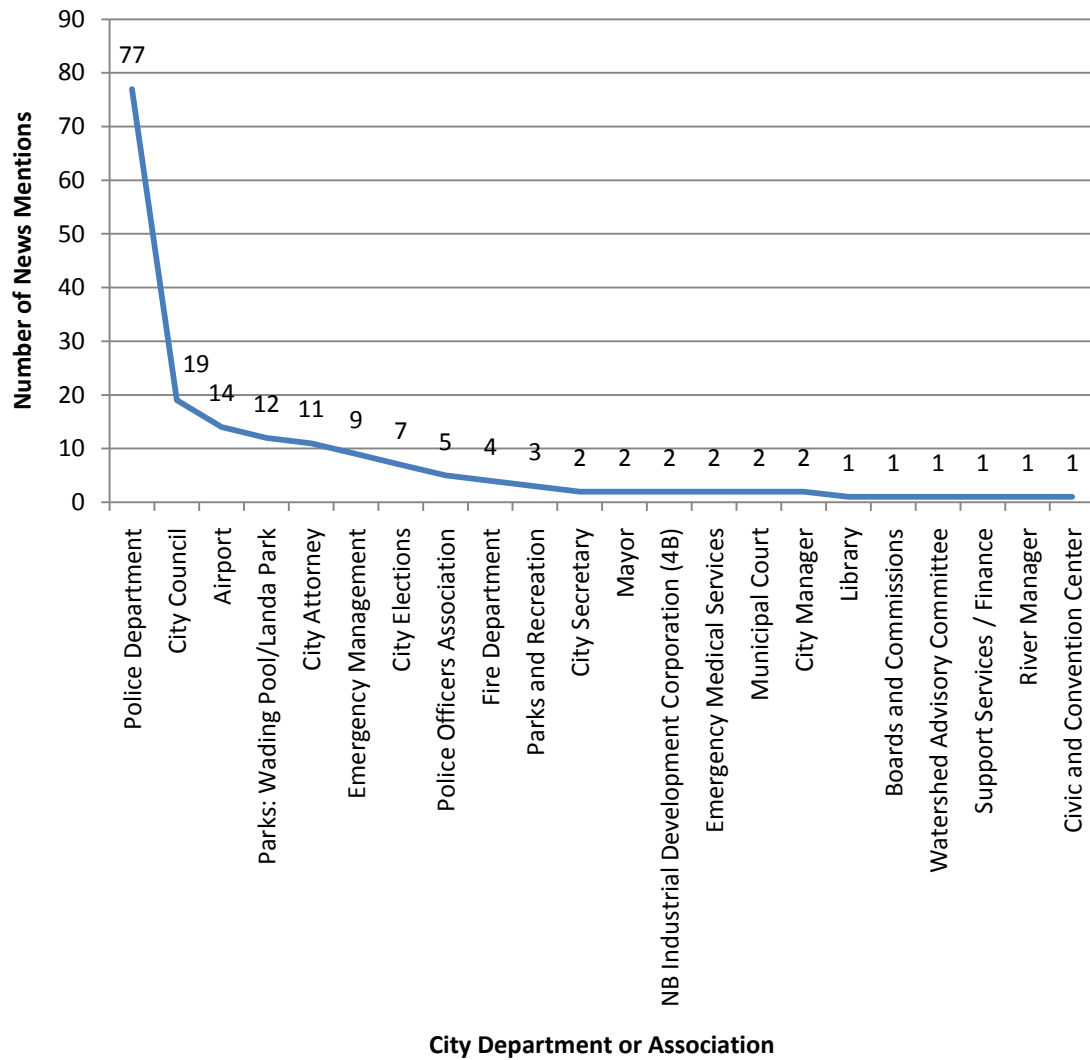
Department was affected by coverage of the search for Joshua Davis, a local child who went missing in the first week of February.

Figure E.1: Online News Sources with Five or More Stories about the City of New Braunfels Government (Feb. 8-Apr. 8, 2011)



Source: "Google alerts beta," Google, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Figure E.2: Number of News Mentions for City of New Braunfels Departments, Organizations, and Events on Online News Sources (Feb. 8-Apr. 8, 2011)



Source: "Google alerts beta," Google, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Table E.1: All Online News Sources with One or More Story about the City of New Braunfels Government (Feb. 8-Apr. 8, 2011)

Number of Stories	Online News Source (Stories)
50 or More	KGNB AM New Braunfels (53)
10 to 49	New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung (18)
5 to 9	San Antonio Express (8), KENS 5 TV San Antonio (8), KVUE ABC Austin (7), KSAT ABC San Antonio (6), KABB Fox San Antonio (5), Houston Chronicle (5)
2 to 4	News.Yahoo.com (4), WOAI NBC San Antonio (3), KXAN NBC Austin (3), KRIS TV Corpus Christi (2), WeAreAustin.com (2), MyFoxAustin (2), Topix.com (2), KWES NewsWest 9 West Texas (2), KNBT FM New Braunfels (2)
Only 1	Seguin Gazette-Enterprise, KFDA CBS Amarillo, KCBD NBC Lubbock, KTEN NBC North Texas, KWTX-TV News 10 Central Texas, El Paso Times, Lone Star Texas News Blog, Headlines Today (UK) Blog, Phoenix Local News Blog, Austin American-Statesman, FreeRepublic.com, Austin YourNewsNow, KHOU Houston, OregonLive.com, AirportBusiness.com, NowAustin.com, Twitter: San Antonio Local, River Cities Daily Tribune, MyFoxLubbock – Fox 34, The Press-Enterprise.com, Killeen Daily Herald, Technology Blog Online, LocalTVUSA.com

Source: “Google alerts beta,” Google, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Appendix F: Results of Social Media Name Searches

As noted in Chapter 3, a municipality can use KnowEm to quickly search a name or keyword across hundreds of social media platforms in several categories, including blogging, microblogging, news communities, and video and photo sharing sites.¹ For example, city officials in New Braunfels could quickly see whether someone is using “New Braunfels” or other derivations of the name across social media services. Such a search could save time and effort while indicating whether or not an agency identity might be co-opted in a public forum.² A survey of four names (“New Braunfels,” “NewBraunfels,” “nbtexas,” the name closely related to the current government URL, and “NewBraunfelsSucks”) in KnowEm proved useful, despite the occurrence of not available/search unknown results (“n/a”).³ The name “NewBraunfelsSucks” was tested as a possible indicator of whether or not a disgruntled person might be using social media to advertise a negative message.

Similarly, InstantDomainSearch.com allows quick checking for name ownership and use of critical URLs that could be beneficial or detrimental to brand image (e.g., newbraunfelssucks.com). New Braunfels could purchase URLs as assets and use them (including selected misspellings) to redirect users back to the actual City of New Braunfels government site.⁴ Meanwhile, negative URLs could be directed toward some form of customer service.⁵ The same manner of searching could be useful for both the city and its departments within popular channels in which New Braunfels may seek social media service.

¹ Name searches at KnowEm.com, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://knowem.com/>.

² Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011.

³ Name searches at KnowEm.com, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://knowem.com/>.

⁴ Webber interview, Feb. 11, 2011.

⁵ Webber interview, Feb. 11, 2011.

Table F.1 (below) summarizes the availability of the four names across the nineteen most popular social media tools. Table F.2 (below) demonstrates the availability of all four names across nine categories of social media sites (blogging, social bookmarking, community, information, microblogging, news, photo-sharing, travel, and video-sharing).

Table F.1: Results of Social Media Profile Searches for Possible New Braunfels Profiles on KnowEm.com (Feb. 2011)

Social Media	Category	New Braunfels	NewBraunfels	nbtexas	NewBraunfelsSucks
Tumblr	Blogging	n/a	No	Yes	Yes
Blogger	Blogging	n/a	No	Yes	Yes
LiveJournal	Blogging	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a
WordPress	Blogging	n/a	No	Yes	Yes
StumbleUpon	Bookmarking	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a
Squidoo	Bookmarking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delicious	Bookmarking	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
MySpace	Community	No	No	Yes	Yes
Facebook	Community	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
SlideShare	Community	No	Yes	Yes	n/a
eHow	Community	No	Yes	Yes	n/a
Hi5	Community	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
Twitter	Microblogging	Yes	No	Yes	n/a
Foursquare	Microblogging	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Digg	News	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Reddit	News	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flickr	Photo	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
DailyMotion	Video	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
YouTube	Video	No	No	No	Yes
TOTAL AVAILABLE		9	10	18	13

Source: Name searches at KnowEm.com, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://knowem.com/>.

Table F.2: Results of Social Media Profile Searches for Possible New Braunfels Profiles across Nine Types of Social Media Sites on KnowEm.com (Feb. 2011)

Shown: Category of Social Media Site, Total Number of Sites per Category (Count), Number of Times the Name is Available, Number of Times the Name is Not Available (Not), and Number of Error Returns.

CATEGORY	New Braunfels		NewBraunfels		nbtexas		NewBraunfelsSucks	
Most Popular	Count	Pct	Count	Pct	Count	Pct	Count	Pct
Total	21		21		21		21	
Available	11	52%	11	52%	20	95%	15	71%
Not	4	19%	10	48%	1	5%	0	0%
Error/Too long	6	29%	0	0%	0	0%	6	29%
Blogging								
Total	37		37		37		37	
Available	19	51%	30	81%	36	97%	27	73%
Not	6	16%	6	20%	1	3%	1	3%
Error/Too long	12	32%	1	17%	0	0%	9	24%
Bookmarking								
Total	36		36		36		36	
Available	30	83%	34	94%	35	97%	29	81%
Not	4	11%	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%
Error/Too long	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%	6	17%
Community								
Total	73		73		73		73	
Available	43	59%	64	88%	69	95%	53	73%
Not	12	16%	6	8%	1	1%	3	4%
Error/Too long	18	25%	3	4%	3	4%	17	23%
Information								
Total	48		48		48		48	
Available	34	71%	46	96%	47	98%	41	85%
Not	7	15%	1	2%	1	2%	1	2%
Error/Too long	7	15%	1	2%	0	0%	6	13%
Microblogging								
Total	24		24		24		24	
Available	18	75%	20	83%	23	96%	20	83%
Not	4	17%	3	13%	1	4%	1	4%
Error/Too long	2	8%	1	4%	0	0%	3	13%

Table F.2: Results of Social Media Profile Searches for Possible New Braunfels Profiles
across Nine Types of Social Media Sites on KnowEm.com (Feb. 2011)
(Continued)

CATEGORY	New Braunfels		NewBraunfels		nbtexas		NewBraunfelsSucks	
	Count	Pct	Count	Pct	Count	Pct	Count	Pct
News								
Total	23		23		23		23	
Available	16	70%	16	70%	18	78%	12	52%
Not	5	22%	6	26%	5	22%	4	17%
Error/Too long	2	9%	1	4%	0	0%	7	30%
Photo								
Total	28		28		28		28	
Available	17	61%	25	89%	27	96%	21	75%
Not	5	18%	3	11%	1	4%	0	0%
Error/Too long	6	21%	0	0%	0	0%	7	25%
Travel								
Total	16		16		16		16	
Available	11	69%	15	94%	15	94%	13	81%
Not	4	25%	1	6%	1	6%	1	6%
Error/Too long	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%
Video								
Total	34		34		34		34	
Available	27	79%	29	85%	33	97%	21	62%
Not	5	15%	5	15%	1	3%	0	0%
Error/Too long	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%	13	38%

Source: Name searches at KnowEm.com, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://knowem.com/>.

Appendix G: Board and Commission Vacancies

Table G.1: New Braunfels Board and Commission Vacancies, 2009-10

Board or Commission	2009							
	May	Jun.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
Airport Advisory Board	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Building Standards Commission	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	
Community Development Advisory Committee						3	2	
Construction Board of Appeals	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
Heritage Commission								
Historic Landmark Commission	1	1	1	1				
Golf Course Advisory Board						2	3	
Main Street Advisory Board						3	2	
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board				3	3			
Planning Commission				1	1			
Zoning Board of Adjustment	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	

Board or Commission	2010								Longest Vacancy
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	
Airport Advisory Board	1	1	3				2	2	11 mos
Building Standards Commission	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1 yr. +
Community Development Advisory Committee	2	2	1				1	1	5 mos.
Construction Board of Appeals	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	1 yr. +
Heritage Commission		3		1	1	1	1	1	5 mos. +
Historic Landmark Commission	1		2						4 mos.
Golf Course Advisory Board	1								3 mos.
Main Street Advisory Board	1	1							4 mos.
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	1	1					1	1	2 mos.
Planning Commission				3	3				2 mos.
Zoning Board of Adjustment	4	4	2	5	1	1	1	1	1 yr. +

Source: Danny Batts, "Board and Commission Vacancy Analysis.xlsx" (Excel document prepared by Deputy City Secretary, City of New Braunfels, Texas, to accompany e-mail "CONB Vacancy Info" to Jon Rogers, Mar. 3, 2011).

Appendix H: Online Activities of American Adults

Table H.1: Online Activities of Adult Internet Users in the United States (2010)

Percentage of Adults	Online Activity
Over 90 percent	Send or receive electronic mail.
Over 80 percent	Use a search engine for information. Search for maps or driving directions.
Over 70 percent	Get news.
Over 60 percent	Visit local, state, or federal government websites. Watch videos on video-sharing websites. Use social networking websites.
Over 50 percent	Look for employment information. Use the Internet for work-related research. Look for information about places to live.
Over 40 percent	Upload photos to photo-sharing websites.
Over 30 percent	Read an online journal or blog. Post reviews or comments about products or services. Share created content.
Over 20 percent	Categorize or tag online content, including photos, news stories, or blog posts. Post comments on websites, news groups, or blogs. Download podcasts.
Over 10 percent	Develop content for their own online journals or blogs.

Source: "Trend Data," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, last modified September 2010, accessed Mar. 9, 2011, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Online-Activites-Total.aspx>.

Appendix I: City of Fort Worth, Texas, Social Media Policy

Reproduced, verbatim, in its entirety with the permission of Jason P. Lamers, Manager, Office of Media and Public Affairs, City of Fort Worth, Texas.⁶

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION D-12 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OFFICIAL CITY OF FORT WORTH BUSINESS

1. PURPOSE

The City's Social Media Policy establishes guidelines for the creating and using City of Fort Worth social media sites as a means of conveying City information to citizens.

Social media websites are changing the way residents communicate and obtain information online. City of Fort Worth (City) departments may consider participating in social media as a part of the City's overall communications strategy to reach a broader audience. Where appropriate, the City of Fort Worth encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments. Social media tools provide an excellent resource for communicating the City's various messages and promoting City services, programs and initiatives. They also allow real-time interaction with citizens, which enables the City to better serve the needs of citizens.

The City of Fort Worth has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding the City's message on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use of social media sites by City of Fort Worth departments, employees and appointed and elected officials as a means of conveying City information to its citizens.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Electronic Record** – Any data or information generated, transmitted and/or stored on Electronic Communications Systems or Services, including e-mail, text messaging, or any other recordable data that constitutes a local government record under the Fort Worth City Code (Ch. 2 Art VIII) and state law (Local Government Code Ch. 201-205).
- **Moderator** – An authorized User within a department who has the responsibility for developing, reviewing, posting, collecting, retaining and expiring social media content on official city social media accounts.
- **Public Information** – For the purposes of this policy, Public Information is any information that is created and or maintained and posted to an online social media website, page or account or social networking site that is related to the transaction of City business as defined by Texas Government Code, Ch. 552.
- **Social Media** – Any digital, web-based application, site or account created and/or maintained by an authorized User or Moderator that allows the sharing of information or exchange of Moderator or consumer generated content about the City and its programs, policies or services. Technologies include but are not limited to, instant messaging,

⁶ E-mail from Jason Lamers, Manager, Office of Media and Public Affairs, City of Fort Worth, Texas, "RE: FW: Informational Interview Request: Fort Worth and Social Media," Apr. 28, 2011.

blogging, microblogging, picture and video sharing and wall postings. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Nixle, LinkedIn and Flickr.

- **Social Media Content** – Any electronic records, data, or information that is created, posted, transmitted, or distributed via a social media site or page operated and/or maintained by an authorized Moderator.
- **Social Networking** – The practice of engaging City stakeholders by making connections via interactive Web-based applications.
- **User** – Any individual including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, consultants and others who are authorized by the respective department director to use social media or social networking in the course of performing City business.

3. DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED

All departments.

4. REFERENCES

- Texas Government Code, Ch. 552, Texas Public Information Act
- Texas Local Government Code, Ch. 205, Electronic Storage of Records
- Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Ch. 7, Electronic Records
- Texas Local Government Code, Ch. 201-205, Local Government Records Act
- Fort Worth City Code, Chapter 2, Article VIII, Records Management
- City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation D-1, Public Information Requests
- City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation D-5, Information Technology Security
- City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation D-7, Electronic Communications Use Policy
- City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation D-9, Information Technology Planning
- City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation D-11, Website Linking and Advertising Policy
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission Retention Schedules for City Records
- City of Fort Worth Personnel Rules and Regulations

5. POLICY

5.1 – City departments are to consult with the City Manager's Office (CMO), Office of Media and Public Affairs (OMPA) about the creation and use of social media/networking sites, pages, accounts and identities to be used in an official capacity by the City, its departments and authorized Moderators to:

- Strengthen direct communication through non-traditional media
- Better promote an informed and engaged public
- Identify, observe and nurture stakeholder networks
- Foster transparency and open government

Social media should be considered a component of a department's strategic communication plan as directed by the City's overall communication strategy and should be designed to push internet traffic to the City's website (www.fortworthgov.org) and contain direct links to related content.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 – It is the responsibility of the OMPA to:

- Maintain any official Citywide (non-department specific) social media accounts and content and provide general oversight of departmental or topical sites
- Recommend social media sites or applications suitable for authorized use by the City
- Consult on the creation of and document the creation of all social media accounts established for the City, its departments, divisions, offices or other units
- Educate and train authorized Moderators on how to best use various social media opportunities
- Regularly monitor and review all social media content for appropriateness, consistency, accuracy and timeliness
- Maintain documentation of passwords as prescribed in Password Appendix 1 to Administrative Regulation (AR) D-5 – Information Technology Security for all departmental accounts in which a departmental PIO is not assigned
- Identify and remove any social media content deemed to possibly be inappropriate, inaccurate or inconsistent with the City's overall communication strategy
- Provide a single location on the City's website with links to all authorized city social media accounts

6.2 – It is the responsibility of the Information Technology Solutions (ITS) Department, or any vendor providing such IT services to the City, to:

- Advise and counsel OMPA and department Public Information Officers (PIOs) in helping to identify any technical issues or security threats that would prevent a site/service from being authorized for use
- Provide guidance and develop security procedures for monitoring and implementing security measures for the use of the Internet on the city's network according to AR D-5 and AR D-7
- Provide authorized Moderators and Users access to social media sites or applications deemed suitable for use by the City and its departments
- Administer and apply other existing policies relevant to the use of social media applications
- Develop and implement an incident response plan in the event the City's system, page or account is hacked or otherwise accessed by an unauthorized source

6.3 – It is the responsibility of any department intending to use social media/networking to ensure that the account requested is not redundant, and that the department has the capacity to support its use as determined by the criteria set forth in this policy. It is the responsibility of department directors to:

- Support and enforce this policy within his or her respective department
- Ensure that the employees within his or her department are knowledgeable of and adhere to the policy regarding use of social media/networking applications

6.4 – It is the responsibility of authorized Moderators to:

- Use social media sites as a way to be proactive and distribute information about City services

- Monitor, review and maintain social media/networking sites in a manner that is appropriate, accurate, timely and consistent with communication strategies as adopted by the OMPA or various city departments
- Use authorized City social media/networking accounts and access only for official City business and not for personal use or gain
- Ensure compliance with this policy and to ensure published information is accurate and be accountable for the content the department posts to any social media site
- Never misrepresent his or her identity by using a false name when acting on behalf of the City
- Notify the ITS Security Manager, or any person providing such services to the City, immediately of any suspicious activity that may compromise the City's network
- Contact the OMPA and request the removal of any comment made by a third party deemed prohibited according to the Terms of Use defined in Section 7.6 of this policy. Only the OMPA can approve the removal of posts unless otherwise authorized by the City Manager.

6.5 – It is the responsibility of authorized Users to:

- Use social media/networking only for official City business and not for personal use or gain
- Not allow social media/networking to interfere with primary job duties, unless such use is a primary duty or an essential job function as authorized by the department director
- Never misrepresent his or her identity by using a false name when acting on behalf of the City

6.6 – It is the responsibility of departmental Public Information Officers (PIOs) to:

- Maintain documentation of passwords for all accounts in their respective department as prescribed in Password Appendix 1 to AR D-5 – Information Technology Security
- Use social media sites as a way to be proactive and distribute information about department services and actions
- Monitor, review and maintain social media/networking sites in a manner that is appropriate, accurate, timely and consistent with communications strategy
- Consult on the creation of and document the creation of all social media accounts within the assigned department
- Contact the OMPA and request the removal of any comment made by a third party deemed prohibited according to the Terms of Use defined in Section 7.6 of this policy. Only the OMPA can approve the removal of posts unless otherwise authorized by the City Manager.

6.7 – It is the responsibility of city employees who have personal social media accounts to:

- Refrain from posting information about the City of Fort Worth using their personal social media accounts.
- Any person identified as an employee of the City of Fort Worth on a publicly accessible site is expected to maintain an online image that is reflective of the off the job conduct expectations outlined in the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations.
- Never use social media accounts while on duty in a way that interferes with the productivity or impairs on the job performance.

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 – Coordination of Policies

This policy coordinates with and does not supersede previously established rules and regulations regarding the use of electronic communications as described in the following Administrative Regulations:

- D-5 – Information Technology Security
- D-7 – Electronic Communications Use Policy
- D-11 – Web Site Linking and Advertising

Employee conduct under this policy is subject to the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations.

7.2 – Authorization to Use a Social Media/Networking Site, Page or Account

It is important to the success of the City's overall communication efforts that participation in any message distribution channel, including social media applications, be coordinated and administered consistently Citywide. As such, departments shall contact the OMPA before creating, registering and/or maintaining a social media account.

The OMPA shall review requests for a social media account and recommend approval/denial to the applicable department director. Denial may occur in instances where the account being requested is redundant, otherwise determined to be unnecessary, a department does not have capacity to support as determined by the criteria set forth in this policy, or such denial is otherwise determined to be in the best interest of the City.

In the event of a denial, an initial appeal may be made to the appropriate Assistant City Manager, and then to the City Manager, if necessary.

No Moderator or User shall engage in two-way communications, make comments about or otherwise respond to readers' posts on City social media sites, unless such two-way communication is approved by the department director as a part of the account registration process.

All social media accounts shall be approved in writing by the department director and approved and registered with the OMPA. Failure to register account(s) will be considered a violation of this policy. Potential consequences could include suspension of the account until it is registered and/or other penalties or consequences as set forth in this policy.

7.3 – Registration of an Authorized Account

For those departments *with an assigned PIO*, the department staff must consult with their designated PIO to document the creation and registration of social media accounts including:

- Department or division responsible for the account
- Account username
- Account password
- Authorized Moderators
- Authorized signature from Department Director and Department PIO

Those departments with an assigned PIO shall forward the Social Media Account Request Form to the OMPA for review and approval and documentation.

For those departments *without* an assigned PIO, the department staff must consult their department director and the OMPA to document the creation and registration of social media accounts. The OMPA shall document the creation and registration of accounts for those departments without an assigned PIO and will maintain a central registry of all authorized accounts and Moderators that will include:

- Department or division responsible for the account
- Account username
- Account password
- Authorized Moderators
- Authorized signature from Department Director and Department PIO

7.4 – Usernames

When allowed by a social media site's terms of service, accounts shall be created using a generic e-mail address such as WaterDept@fortworthgov.org. This type of e-mail address can be set up through the ITS Helpdesk (817-392-8800). When a generic e-mail address is not allowed by a social media site's terms of service, accounts must be established according to that site's terms of service as consistent with other provisions of this policy and other relevant City policies.

7.5 – Page Elements

- In the "About Us," "Bio," or other appropriate section, identify the page as an official City service. For example: *"Official Twitter page of the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department."* As space allows, the department's mission, description of services, contact information and third-party disclaimers can be included in this section.
- Include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the social media presence. Where possible, department social media accounts should link back to the www.fortworthgov.org to access further information and/or download forms and documents.

7.6 – Social Media Accounts that allow public posting and/or two-way communication

For those accounts that allow public comments or two-way communication, the following Terms of Use shall be posted on www.fortworthgov.org or through a direct link where possible as the main page as the Public Comments Policy:

This forum is not monitored at all times. Do NOT use this forum to report emergency situations or time-sensitive issues. This site or page is not the official website of the City and is not an authorized medium for acceptance of public information requests or to request City services. All requests for public information should be directed to the Records and Information Management Office (publicinformation@fortworthgov.org). All requests for services shall be directed to the appropriate City department.

Comments do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the City and will be deleted if such comments violate the law and/or City policies. Comments and/or statements

posted on this page do not constitute notice to the City of any claims or conditions.

Please keep to the following guidelines in mind when posting:

- *We do not allow profanity or obscene comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that are defamatory or comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.*
 - *Content that promotes or advocates violence or the threat of violence will not be tolerated and will be removed.*
 - *Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, gender identity or sexual orientation will not be tolerated and will be removed.*
 - *The City requests that all comments be limited to the topic of the original post.*
 - *We do not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.*
 - *We do not allow content that violates the intellectual property rights of the City or a third party.*
 - *We do not allow information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.*
 - *We do not allow content or comments that endorse, publicize or promote a particular political party, campaign or candidate for public office.*
 - *All comments are subject to public records law.*
 - *The appearance or external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the City of Fort Worth.*
 - *There is no expectation of privacy in comments posted to any City of Fort Worth site.*
- Only comments that violate the Terms of Use in this section of the policy may be removed by the OMPA, or by the moderator or departmental PIO with approval from the OMPA.
 - When it is appropriate to address negative comments, it should be done in a positive manner. Direct arguments should be avoided.
 - Departments may use the official department logo if such department logo has been approved. If no department logo has been approved, then departments must use the official City of Fort Worth Molly logo. Official logos may also be included in the design of a background image.

7.7 – Followers, fans and friends

When establishing a Facebook presence, accounts shall be a Fan or Group page – not a “friend” or personal profile. Authorized Facebook and other social media accounts will follow/fan/friend only:

- **Other City of Fort Worth authorized accounts**
- **Organizations that receive direct financial support from the City**
- **Organizations in which the City maintains a membership**
- **Public organizations directly related to a department’s mission or business, and state, local or federal governmental agencies or local school districts or libraries**
- **Non-profit program partners that support the mission and goals of the City, e.g., The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation, Fort Worth Botanical Society, PetSmart**

Charities; or other charitable, educational, medical, scientific or cultural organizations that service North Texas

- **Entities that contract with the City to provide services to the public or for the use of public facilities**
- **Business or commercial enterprises in which the City has a direct financial interest or receives a direct financial benefit from the activities of the business**
- **Other public entities related to the mission and business of the City of Fort Worth generally**
- **Exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the City Manager**

7.8 – Closing Social Media Accounts

If it is necessary to close a City authorized social media account or application, the applicable Moderator shall inform their designated PIO and the OMPA so that the account can be recorded as closed and inactive. Depending on the particular social media application, it may be necessary for the OMPA and/or department PIO to inform the public about the closing.

7.9 – Passwords

All passwords shall be created in accordance with City of Fort Worth Administrative Regulation (AR) D5 – Appendix 1, City of Fort Worth Password Policy, or other applicable City policy on the creation of electronic passwords.

8. Prohibited or Inappropriate Use

8.1 – In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, members of the City Council and/or City Boards or Commissions shall not respond to any published messages, or comments, or use authorized City social media applications or any form of electronic communication to respond to, comment on, blog or engage in unauthorized meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate or express opinions on any matter related to City business or that may come within the jurisdiction of the body. City Council member Aides shall follow this same policy.

8.2 – Prohibited or inappropriate use of social media sites or accounts includes, but is not limited to:

- Promoting illegal or fraudulent activity
- Using social media for charitable endeavors not authorized by the City
- Sharing/posting material that depicts nudity, is threatening, obscene, profane, sexually explicit, demeaning to others, has sexual, racial, ethnic or religious jokes, slurs or themes that are reasonably determined to be offensive or inappropriate
- Conducting, endorsing or promoting political campaigns or other related political activity
- Using social media in a way that interferes with the productivity or impairs the work of any Moderator or User
- Using social media to harass, create a hostile work environment or otherwise disrupt the orderly flow of work within the City as set forth in the City's Harassment-free Workplace Policy
- Using social media to reveal personally identifying information about citizens, City employees or City officials that is protected by law
- Posting sensitive or confidential information about official City business to personal social media sites or city authorized accounts

See also AR D-7 Electronic Communications Use Policy.

8.3 – Review of Posted Content:

- All content, including external hyperlinks contained in posts, is subject to monitoring and review by the OMPA, department PIOs or department Moderators to ensure compliance with City policies and procedures.
- When deemed necessary, if the moderator cannot be reached in a timely fashion to make necessary changes to an authorized social media site, the OMPA and/or department PIOs are authorized to remove or delete any social media content that violates this policy.
- Any content that jeopardizes the security or safety of the City's network or poses a security threat to users of the system may be deleted by the ITS Security Manager.

8.4 – Use of City-issued Electronic Equipment:

- The use of equipment and/or electronic resources owned, issued, and/or managed by the City, including computers, Blackberry devices, PDA's, etc., to access social media accounts or pages shall be governed by the City's Administrative Regulation AR D-7, Electronic Communications Use Policy.
- Generally, city electronic devices should be used for business purposes only. Authorized users may, at times, view information that is personal in nature and not related to City business; however, social media access should never be used while on duty in a way that interferes with an employee's productivity or impairs on the job performance.

9. Collection, Retention and Expiration of Social Media Content

9.1 – Information posted on or transmitted via a social media site is subject to the same records retention schedule as other electronic records, similar to e-mail. Whether and how to retain the information depends on the actual content and function rather than format. For example, information related to permits or licenses shall follow retention schedules associated with permits or licenses. Information related to easements or deeds shall follow retention schedules associated with easements and deeds, and so forth.

9.2 – Social media content is generally considered routine correspondence and should be retained as long as the correspondence is administratively valuable, but not longer than seventy-two (72) hours, unless a public information request has been made for such content. In the event of a public information request, the OMPA and/or the moderator should consult with the law department prior to removing content.

10. Violations

10.1 – Actions not in compliance with this policy or with any other applicable City policy shall be considered a violation of its terms. Any Moderator or User deemed in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, determined by the department director, up to and including termination, depending on the circumstances. Moderators or Users who violate the terms of use of third-party social media sites are subject to those sites' penalties.

11. Effective Date

This policy is effective as of date signed by the City Manager.

Appendix J: Social Media Measuring and Monitoring Tools

The following examples of social media measurement and monitoring tools are acknowledged in market research or descriptive studies of government social media use. Because monitoring tools are evolving and subject to change at any time, this study does not recommend one application over another. Instead, this alphabetical list of services or tools is presented only as an illustration of possible tools available at the time of publication and should not be considered comprehensive or static in nature. In cases in which multiple tools are cited with similar functions, one application is listed, and others are noted as similar under the function column.

Table J.1: Social Media Measuring and Monitoring Tools

Service or Tool	Function
Bit.Ly	Shortens URL links to facilitate sharing through microblogging services. ¹
Biz360	Measures the stimulation of advocacy by calculating the number of active advocates on behalf of an organization over the last thirty days, relative to total advocates. Similar: Filtrbox by Jive, Radian6. ²
BlogPulse	Capable of searching and tracking blog conversations involving specific keyword. ³ Similar: Google Blog Search, Technorati, Backtype, Yacktrack, or Commentful.
BoardTracker	Capable of searching and tracking discussion board conversations involving specific keywords. ⁴ See also: Blog Keyword Searching.

¹ Chris Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities*, eds. Allison Brummel, Catherine Lamb, and Jack Higgins (Philadelphia, PA: Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania Arts and Sciences, 2010), p. 20.

² Jeremiah Owyang and John Lovett, *Social Marketing Analytics: A New Framework for Measuring Results in Social Media* (San Mateo, CA: Altimeter, Apr. 22, 2010), p. 16.

³ Brian Solis and Deirdre Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/FT Press, 2009), p. 217.

⁴ Dan Schawbel, "Top 10 Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand's Reputation," Mashable, last modified Dec. 24, 2008, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/?cp=4>.

Table J.1: Social Media Measuring and Monitoring Tools (Continued)

Service or Tool	Function
Conversation Reach Measurement	Demonstrates the total number of participants in an online conversation relative to the total amount of exposure of the conversation. Pay-for-service options include Alterian SM2, Radian 6, Scout Labs, Social Radar, Statsit, SWIX, Trendrr, and Visible Technologies. ⁵
Coremetrics	Measures the total number of comments, shared material, and trackbacks relative to the total number of views. Similar: Webtrends, Radian6, Scout Labs, Converseon, Filtrbox by Jive, and Visible Technologies ⁶
Cymfony	Measures the scope of influence by an organization's advocates across one or more social media channels. Similar: Filtrbox by Jive, Lithium, Radian6, Razorfish, SAS, Telligent, Twitalyzer, or Visible Technologies. ⁷
Facebook Analytics	Demonstrates the utility of a Facebook page, including longitudinal analysis of user volume or viewership, user demographics, and the quality of interaction between entity and its fans. ⁸
Google Analytics	Provides a dashboard for tracking trends of mentions across several social media channels. Similar: Radian6, BuzzLogic, and FiltrBox (by Jive). ⁹
Google Reader	Collects several news feed updates into a single central platform to reduce the need for searching for news across several websites. Similar: Feedburner, MyYahoo. ¹⁰

⁵ Owyang and Lovett, *Social Marketing Analytics: A New Framework for Measuring Results in Social Media* (2010), p. 14.

⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁸ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 21.

⁹ Christopher Vollmer with Geoffrey Precourt, *Always On: Advertising, Marketing, and Media in an Era of Consumer Control* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2008), p. 136-137; "Google Analytics," Google, accessed Mar. 7, 2011, <http://www.google.com/analytics>; Charlene Li, "Transforming Cities Using Social Media," (annual meeting presentation, League of California Cities, July 30, 2009), accessed Mar. 2011, <http://www.slideshare.net/charleneli/transforming-cities-with-social-media>; Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 100; Schawbel, "Top 10 Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand's Reputation," Mashable, <http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/?cp=4>.

¹⁰ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 100.

Table J.1: Social Media Measuring and Monitoring Tools (Continued)

Service or Tool	Function
HootSuite	Allows unified maintenance of several social media accounts or accounts across several users; tracks follower activity; facilitates scheduling of pre-planned Twitter messages. ¹¹ Similar: SocialOomph.
Icerocket	Provides free and aggregated data from searches of the Internet, blogs, Twitter, and other social networking sites over a period of time. ¹²
Keotag	Capable of searching and tracking social networking bookmarks involving specific keywords. ¹³ See also: Blog Keyword Searching.
Lithium	Estimates advocacy impact by calculating the number of online advocacy-driven conversations relative to the total volume of advocacy traffic. Similar: Coremetrics, Omniture, Webtrends, SWIX, Telligent. ¹⁴
Podbean	Provides analytics for podcasts, including the number of times a podcast has been streamed or the number of episodes downloaded over time, with the location of listening audiences. ¹⁵
Share of Voice Measurement	Measure of mentions of an organization relative to its competitors. Pay-for-service options include Alterian SM2, Radian6, Scout Labs, Statsit, Trendrr, and Visible Technologies. ¹⁶

¹¹ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 20.

¹² Daniel Webber (Senior Account Supervisor and Digital Crisis Team Leader, Edelman, Washington, DC), interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011.

¹³ Schawbel, "Top 10 Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand's Reputation," Mashable, <http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/?cp=4>.

¹⁴ Owyang and Lovett, *Social Marketing Analytics: A New Framework for Measuring Results in Social Media* (2010), p. 17.

¹⁵ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 21.

¹⁶ Owyang and Lovett, *Social Marketing Analytics: A New Framework for Measuring Results in Social Media* (2010), p. 13.

Table J.1: Social Media Measuring and Monitoring Tools (Continued)

Service or Tool	Function
Tumblr	Aggregates social media channels into one platform for easier monitoring of information feeds and sharing of information across several social media sites. ¹⁷ Similar: FriendFeed.
Tweetdeck	Sorts conversations hosted on Twitter; manages hashtag searches; facilitates posting to Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and MySpace. ¹⁸
Tweetstats	Capable of graphing Twitter use and measuring effectiveness of Twitter feeds, with the additional capability of integrating Bit.Ly and Google Analytics. ¹⁹
Twitter Search	Provides results of keyword searches across Twitter tweets. Similar: Twemes, Twilert, TweetBeep. ²⁰
Wordpress Twitter Tools	Integrates microblogging with regular blog posting. ²¹
YouTube Analytics	Demonstrates the utility of a YouTube channel, including longitudinal analysis of user volume or viewership, user demographics, and audience location. ²²

¹⁷ Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 169; Schawbel, "Top 10 Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand's Reputation," Mashable, <http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/?cp=4>.

¹⁸ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 20.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁰ Gerald C. Kane, Robert C. Fichman, John Gallagher, and John Glaser, "Community Relations 2.0," *Harvard Business Review*, November 2009, p. 6; Webber interview with Jonathan Rogers, Feb. 11, 2011; Sarah Evans, "Social Media for Business: The Dos and Don'ts of Sharing," Mashable, last modified Feb. 27, 2009, accessed Feb. 8, 2011, <http://mashable.com/2009/02/27/social-media-for-business-2/>; Solis and Breakenridge, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations: How Social Media is Reinventing the Aging Business of PR* (2009), p. 259; Schawbel, "Top 10 Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand's Reputation," Mashable, <http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/?cp=4>.

²¹ Kingsley, *Making the Most of Social Media: 7 Lessons from Successful Cities* (2010), p. 20.

²² Ibid., p. 21.

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Vita

Jonathan Rogers received his Bachelor of Arts in Government and his teaching certification from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. After two years of teaching high school social studies, he served for four years in the office of United States Senator John Warner of Virginia (now retired) as an administrative and legislative staffer. He entered graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin in August 2008 and is a candidate for graduation in May 2011. Upon graduation, he will receive his Master of Business Administration from the McCombs School of Business and his Master of Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. In Fall 2009, he was selected for publication in *PolicyMatters*, the policy journal of the University of California, Berkeley (“Confronting Bullies on the Digital Schoolyard,” edited by James Baird and Ethan Jacobs). During the summer of 2010, he served as a Management and Budget Analyst as part of a volunteer internship with the City of New Braunfels, Texas.

Permanent E-mail Address: jdrogers@utexas.edu

The author typed this report.